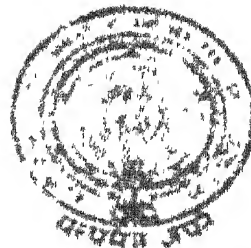




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# THE ART OF L.P. AKSHI

By Gopalakrishna Murthy



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The Government of Andhra Pradesh  
HYDRABAD



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# THE ART OF LEPAKSHI

by

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PERIOD V:  
THE ANTIEN PREPARING OF A GOOD CLASS,  
MENT COMPOUND, AND GOOD

## F O R E W O R D

The first of the two temples at Lepakshi was erected by Anantavarman Chodavarmas, ruler of the Chola country, about 1050 A.D. It was dedicated to Anantadesha, Patron deity and Roman deity, on the south hillside of the place. Later, he was raised to the important position of the ruler of Anantadeswaram, who succeeded to the Vijayanagar throne. Then his brother, Keshavaiah, Varapurna, the then governor of the province of Pandya, was also to have raised the temple complex spending a big government money accumulated from tax collection. The ruler king summoned the offender to his presence in the capital, but Varapurna testifies his painless it by plucking out his own eye in spite of the threat issued. The king donated very liberally to the temple and still some revenues are distributed.

Lepakshi has the unique distinction of having incorporated in its architecture, the characteristic Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting of that affluent period of political activity. The famous bull cart of Asvini is found carved there from reddish orange granite rock. The arch-headed serpent of its present size in stone, found there above a Sivalinga is equally rare in India. Some of the finest sculptured multiple pillars of the Vijayanagar period are to be found in the ardhmandapa of the Lepakshi temple.

Painting, exactly with Jama conventions of the palm-leaf manuscripts of central India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is found done at Lepakshi on a mega scale on the inner roof space of these temple hall. It is highly interesting to see the peculiar results of this sudden change of scale, in the individual items of the compositions. The highly subdued emotion in all the characters, the preference either of the profile or frontal positions exclusively and the rich geometric design printed on the garments impress even a casual visitor to that shrine.

During 1962, our department published in Telugu a small monograph on Lepakshi written by this author Sri S. Gopalakrishnamurthy. This book is not just a translation of that work into English. The author has incorporated in this book, new results of his investigation, since then, on Murtyunjaya, a very rare-perhaps the only one southern example present at Lepakshi, the new paintings uncovered by scientific treatment, and in his description of the sculptures generally. And this book is richly illustrated. The reader would not fail to mark herein the stamp of the teacher explaining his extensive domain, though he might miss the conventional treatment of a professional archaeologist.

My thanks are due to the learned author Sri S. Gopalakrishnamurthy for kindly translating his previous work on Lepakshi Kalamandapam from Telugu into English to the benefit of scholars and general readers. He has not attempted the verbatim translation of his Telugu publication but in lucid and scholarly style shed a new light on paintings and other aspects. I am quite sanguine this publication will be welcomed by scholars working chiefly on the late medieval art of India.

MO. ABDUL WAHEED KHAN,  
*Director of Archaeology & Museums,*



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

1. Lepakshi, the wonder name of a shrine eight miles from Hindupur has more attractions than any single shrine in Andhra which shows the painting of the Vijayanagar period, in addition to sculpture, architecture and literature. The interesting fact that this painting is a natural development of the miniature painting of the Jains provides for a new chapter in the history of Indian painting.

2. The inflorescence of sculpture of the times of the Hoysalas tended to disappear into the fruits of the 'epidemic' form of Vijayanagar architecture wherein the rotundity of sculpture sickened into base leanness, and often got inscribed as 'outline sculpture'. Lepakshi amplified the whispers of the pillar-attached portrait sculpture of the Reddi kings of Kondavidu and Rajahmundry into the 'loudspeaking' pillar sculptures of *puranic* and social personalities numbering about fifty in one temple!

3. In architecture however fate stopped Virupanna, the builder of the Lepakshi temple from turning nearly a square mile of the area round the shrine into 'the biggest temple complex in Andhra', as he was overtaken by death from the wrath of the emperor, for spending public money to build the temple!

4. Lepakshi bustled with festivities, dramas, dances and writers till a hundred and fifty years ago. May be the 'dislike' of the famous collector Munro (of the twin districts of Anantapur and Bellary), for Veerabhadra, who was according to him only a 'murderer', abruptly pushed it into oblivion.

5. This is an English version of my book in Telugu published earlier by the Archaeology Department. My thanks are due to its Director, Sri Waheed Khan for pushing this through. Some additional information and further evidence for earlier conclusions is presented in this book and minute details of Lepakshi literature, not likely to be of any interest to the non-Telugu reader are omitted.

S. GOPALAKRISHNAMURTY.

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## I. THE LEPAKSHI TEMPLE

Lepakshi is a village eight miles to the east of Hindupur in Anantapur district. To the south of that village is a white granite hillock named Kurmasaila from its resemblance to the dome of the tortoise. The big temple on this hillock formed by the integration of the Papanashesvara, Raghunathesvara and Veerabhadra temples is the famous Lepakshi temple. Source material to enable us to answer the questions 'which was the temple first built on the Kurmasaila?', and which were those that followed later?' – is not available however. The earliest inscription in the temple is dated 1538 A.D. In those days, Lepakshi was an ordinary village of Roddnad division. Today, the village to the left of the road from Hindupur is called 'old Lepakshi'. This was probably the original village. The village has a tank and on its bund and below we see old temples of Siva. All these together were known as Lepakshi. On the eastern wall of the second prakara of today's Lepakshi temple, (which is about 200 yards to the right of the road) we see an inscription mentioning 'the Veeresvarapura of the village Lepakshi'. This indicates that the Veeresvara temple and the suburb which arose round the temple came into being only after Lepakshi was built near the tank. Contour bunding on a large scale made all the tanks in western Andhra and the tank of Lepakshi is one such. The phrase 'Lepakshyaam Papanashanaha' in the Skaanda purana indicates the presence of Papanashesvara at Lepakshi and that He was earliest deity to be installed at Lepakshi. The eastern wall of the Papanashesvara temple of today is a huge boulder, the walls on the other three sides having been built out of stone. These do not carry any sculptural ornamentation on their outer faces. On the eastern boulder in the garbhaalaya is carved a relief of Bhikshaatana Siva. This type of relief sculpture is seen in the temples of the Pallavas and those built by later Cholas like the temple near the Manikantessvara of Kaalahasti. The outer walls of the Pallava temples carry the decoration of pilasters and relief sculptures. We see in Kaalahasti a temple-hall, the rock wall of which is filled with relief sculptures looking as if done in leisure time by sculptors engaged in professional work nearby. May be the Bhikshaatana Siva on the eastern inner surface of the Papanashesvara Sanctum was carved playfully and as in Kaalahasti, someone might have built the temple to bring it to use. So, it would appear that a cubicle-temple was originally raised for the Papanashesvara linga, and Virupanna added the shikhara and the present day door jamb provided with dwaarapalas. The Veerabhadra temple facing the north was also built by Virupanna, we read of praises of 'Virupanna's God Veerabhadra devara' in the inscriptions. The other temple in the trio is that of Raghunathesvara. There is no evidence to show that this one could have been constructed earlier than the Veerabhadra's. So I presume that three small shrines on the hillock would have been brought to their present shape by Virupanna himself.

### *Name :*

'Lepakshi' means an 'embalmed eye' or 'an eye drawn in paint'. It is not easy to explain, why this name was ascribed to this village. It was only in the Vijayanagar times that this village rose to importance. The Vijayanagar kings usually named the villages they gifted to either temples or pandits after their names. It was in accordance with that tradition that Nandicherla was named Virupaksha



maharaya samudram. Kanchisamudra came to be called Pratapa devarayendrapura. Chikanandi cheruvu named Devarayamudra, Nagaragiri called Krishnarayasamudra and Hampanapalli named Kumara-  
 venk tadarasamudra. Kilanuru became 'Triyambakariyanapura'. The inscriptions of Lepakshi which  
 mention the village names do not indicate anything regarding the name of Lepakshi. The villagers  
 say that Sri Rama saw the wounded Jataayu here and said, 'Lepakshi' (meaning 'get up bird') in Telugu.  
 Telugu could not have existed as a language in Rama's times nor could he have spoken Telugu if it did.  
 Visitors to the temple are shown today two stripes on a stone on the wall, explaining the 'Lepa' or paint-  
 like stripes is those caused by the liquid of the eye balls of Virupanna who struck the wall with his eyes  
 which he himself had plucked for fear of worse punishment by his king Achutadevaraya. To say that  
 the village got its name from the dried up liquid of Virupanna's eyes does not fit into other known facts.  
 We noted already that this part of the township was known as Veereswarapura. Lepakshi's name existed  
 even before the rise of the temple and the suburbs. The eyes of the murals in the temple are big and  
 exaggerated in general. 'The village of the temple of the (exaggerated) painted eyes is Lepakshi' say some.  
 But even this is not probable as the temple was built after the village was raised. If so,

#### *What could Lepakshi signify?*

The word Lepakshi has a feminine indication even as Padmakshi, Kamakshi, Meenakshi or  
 Vishalakshi. All the four deities mentioned are famous in South India. Could Lepakshi be a similar  
 female deity? As Kanchi for Kamakshi, Madura for Meenakshi and Hanumakonda for Padmakshi,  
 a town not less than existed to denote Lepakshi, could the name Lepakshi itself have been attached to the  
 village? Mahanandi got its name from Mahanandisvara, Tripurantakam from Tripurantakesvara and  
 Kadambur from Kadambur. Could not Lepakshi owe its name to a deity Lepakshi? The word denotes  
 painted eyes and may be the figure of the deity was a painting on a wall with prominent eyes! Even if she  
 had been an idem - like the present day Chaudesvari of Cholasamudram or Muthyalamma of  
 Chongadipatti and her big eyes painted beautifully, she could very well have been called Lepakshi. A friend  
 says that the consort of Paranaslesvara was perhaps 'Lepakshi', but I did not hear such a story  
 elsewhere. If 'Lepakshi' had been the name of a deity, that name would also be given to children and  
 Lepakshi and Lepakshappas would be heard of. Could 'Lepakshi' be the Sanskritisation of a Telugu  
 name (as usual)? The Telugu meaning of Lepakshi is 'Mudda Kannu'. We hear of Muddamma and  
 Kannamma in Telugu, but not Mudda Kannamma. Virupanna is the balder of this temple and  
 his mother's name was Muddamma. In Tamil, Munda-kanniyamma - i.e. Vishalakshi - is a village  
 deity. Her eyes are painted ere only. Could the name Lepakshi have been the Sanskrit name of Munda-  
 kanniyamma? It is found in this village along with Chaudesvari of Cholasamudram? The latter one was  
 worshipped by Krishnadevaraya. Could the Sanskrit name of the deity got fixed up for the village too?  
 We are told that there is no Canares name, which could have been Sanskritised as Lepakshi. The earliest  
 inhabitant of the village is Papanashesvara. The tank and village would have followed him, though at  
 a distance of half a mile. Could His third eye have been a painted one and people said 'His is a painted  
 eye' 'That shrine is Papanashesvara with a painted eye'. The recognition that the linga was of Siva's  
 form sprung up with Veerasaiva. The practice of endowing the linga with the tripundras - or triple bands  
 on the forehead and a third eye started with Veerasaiva. We see at Sri Sailam the sculptures of the linga  
 with a hand stretching from one side to hold a devotee's hand. There was a Virupaksha temple in the  
 Western Chalukyan Capital but it could be the Virupaksha of Hampi only that could have elicited the echo

of 'akshita' for the linga. (I do not know if a Virupaksha is known even on the borders of the Telugu country earlier than the Virupaksha of Hampi. We know of a Sarvabhadra, Kapotisvara, Mallikharjuna, Bheemesvara, Koppesvara and a Tripurantaka, but not a Virupaksha in the Telugu area). May be, it was only after Hampi Virupaksha that the Paapanaishesvara was established as Lepaksha at this village. However, this question cannot be answered with the evidence now available.

### *The Construction*

However, the problem of Lepakshi is not solved if its name is solved. The secret of the Koormishanka is shrouded in mystery. The huge boulders and open caves in the South-east of today's temple remind us of the usual hunts of Jains. Most of the temples of Veerabhadra are built on destroyed Jain temples. But I could not discover any Jain remains in Lepakshi. The pillars in the ardhamandapa, which are believed to be of Jain do not carry any Jain symbols. There is no reason for naming them Jain. Virupanna might have found small flat temples here and built the skhalaya for the Paapanaishesvara, Veerabhadra and Raghunathesvara temples and enclosed them all by the ardhamandapa. We do not find any evidence to say with certainty that the three temples were constructed by Virupanna. He was the governor of the Pennakondra province, while Atchutappa, Krishnadeva's younger brother was ruling over the Vijayanagar empire. Nandilakshmi was his father and Mudamma his mother. We see her mentioned as 'Madanabika' in the inscriptions. Virupanna is mentioned as 'Virupanna Nayaka' and 'Vasumati Bhoop'. It is thus clear that he got the governorship of Pennakondra. Veeranna was mentioned to be his younger brother (cf. *temmandara* and 'Virupanna' against *Sri Veerabhoop*). Both brothers were therefore governors. Veeranna raised a temple named 'Takkammagudi' in Goravandalli near Lepakshi. That temple is on level ground and like the temples of those days, it has a raised garbhagriha and shukanasi. Virupanna had to build on a hillock and hence had to make but a general attempt to harmonise the construction. Lord Veerabhadra is praised in the Lepakshi inscriptions as 'Virupanna Prasanna Sri Veerabhadra'. Virupanna was a Veerasaivite. That was why he raised a temple to that Lord and provided a shukanasi towards the north. But the Vijayanagara emperor was a Vishnvaishnavite and that was a note of reconciliation of the Saivite and Vaishnavite differences. Virupanna would have certainly realised that it was not wise to emphasise on extreme Saivism by raising only a temple of Veerabhadra. That could be the reason for his adding the temple of Raghunathesvara and enclosing all the three temples with gifts.

### *The Paapanaishesvara temple*

We find six small temples in the closed ardhamandapa. The Paapanaishesvara faces west. The paanavatta or the pedestal of the linga resembles those in the Bana temples of Parigal with their circular boundaries. The garbhagriha is built with huge faced blocks of stone like the small temples of the Western Chalukyas. The garbhagriha and the shukanasi were already there and Virupanna got the door jamb of the latter removed having given pillar supports at its four corners, and provided the present door jamb, got made by him. This jamb is not in coarse granite as the rest of the temple is. An examination of the noses of the dwarapalas on this jamb makes one feel if the same sculptor, who worked at the so-called 'Paanchaalapurusha' on the pillar at the north-east corner of this ardhamandapa, had carved these also. We see at the centre of the upper cross bar, a six handed deity with a crown. The lowest pair of hands

have a Kalasha and rest in his lap - nay padmaasana. The central pair hold similar pots and upper pair are emptying the pots on his head (with the diadem in position). The pots serve him for a bath, they could not be phials of medicine or pots of amrita. On the ceiling of the Veranda south of the ardhamandapa (to reader we see a painting of this god. He too has similar pots in his multiple hands. There are devotees on his two side, and he wears a tigerskin. Isvara is endowed with similar wear in the paintings of Lepikshi and here we can guess that this six-handed deity must be Isvara or one of his forms. A friend of mine said that he is Mrutyunjaya. How could this one enjoying Varuna's right be Mrutyunjaya? Where is Yama, the god of death and where is Markandeya? Whatever be the truth, this figure belongs to Virupanna's time, not to an earlier period. I haven't yet seen such a figure on the door jamb of an Iwera temple. To which of the Kaalamukha, Parasurata, Aghora, Kaapalika or Lakulisa traditions could this belong? Looking up from inside the garbhagriha, we find the ceiling closed by wooden rafters. Western Chalukyan garbhagrihas are seen to be closed similarly (Eastern Chalukyan Biccavol temples are not). But then they made sikharas by piling up in a close fit, not by building with mortar between the horizontal rows. In the Vijayanagara period, even four-pillared mandapas, not to mention of temple sikharas, were first closed at the top and then only the sikhara constructed. This sikhara of Paapanaasheshvara therefore, looks to be of the Vijayanagara period. Sikharas resembling this, and those of the Vijayanagara period are seen at Bukkaraaya Samudram and Penukonda. The Vijayanagara sikharas are not after Chola or Hoysala types. This one is one of the shapes resulting in the continuous attempt to evolve a sikhara, distinct from those types. The temple of 'Paarvati', which is to the south of Paapanaasheshvara has no sikhara. The simple name Parvati denotes that this temple is not of old at all. Nor is the icon Parvati as described in books, she does not have the linga and paanavatta in one of her hands. Even the parts of the door jamb look like those pieced together for a necessity, but not those carved for the purpose. One of the dwarapalas is missing, the upper cross bar does not carry any symbol at its centre. Even much before the Paapanaasheshvara is not carved out of Lepikshi stone. The ornamentation here differs from that of the Colossus outside the town. May be, that this one was brought from somewhere outside to match the temple. (We see an old dilapidated temple without a linga on the tank bund of old Lepakshi). It was probably the Kakateyas, who started the tradition of mounting the nandi on a pedestal. This nandi as well as its pedestal are just about the size and shape found in the small temples of the Telugu Cholas.

#### *Raghunatha temple*

The deity of the name of 'Ragounatha devana' installed in the temple opposite to Paapanaasheshvara is not Kodanda Rimaswamy as some call him, he is Chennakesava. The Kannadigas call him Chennakesava only. According to the inscriptions of the sixteenth century he is 'Raghunatha devaru'. We find the deity installed in Venkatesa temples only after the Vijayanagara hey day. Till then Lakshmi and Narasimha, Uma and Maheshwari (i.e. Yaganti) were carved and installed together. Even though we do not see the coort here, we can guess that this figure belongs to those old days. This Raghunatha devaru has a pedestal under him. In the Vijayanagara period Vaishnavites appear to have adopted the custom of bathing the deity as the Sarvites and Jains did. And so a paanavatta or pedestal became necessary even for Raghunatha. We see a Gajalakshmi, not Garuda on the door jamb here. Probably Vaishnavism was not very popular then in these parts. We do not mark in the sikhara of the temple, the confusion observable in the Hajarara Rama, Atchutarayaalaya and Krishnaswamy temples of Vijayanagara. So it is probable that this one was raised later than those, i.e. in the times of Virupanna.

*Veerabhadra temple :*

In addition to Paṇpanāśhesvara-linga, we see Rama-linga and Hanumalingas in the ardhnamandapa. A small brick temple is raised round one. The local people are of the view that it is old just because it is in brick and not in stone. But the ornamentation of its small sized pilasters and the quadrangular amalaka are in obstacle to its being ancient. The pilasters are after the (stone) pilasters but not after any 'ancient' ones. The amalaka is not like the one of Raghunātha-śaṭaṭi's temple. So this one is contemporaneous with the main temples here. The Viṇayamāra temple sikhara were built in stone but the amalakas were in brick. Nothing about this small inner temple is therefore ancient. The Veereshvara temple is by the side of these small ones. This one is the Veerabhadra temple. This faces the north. The door jamb, with its Savitēdvaarapādas on either side and elephants doing lineā worship at the centre of the upper crossbar, is cent per cent savite. Below the Gaja-tantra motif was probably a lion face or gandabherunda, which is found effaced with a chisel. I am unable to interpret this. This temple consists also of a garbhāalaya and sukanāsi. The Veerabhadra in the temple is four to five feet like the Veerabhadra figures of the Veerasaiva period. The Sikhara of this temple is better than the other two of this temple complex. Its stability, clarity of its tīaras, and the particular form of its amalaka make it the best of the three here. The breaks of the Raghunātha sikhara tīaras look like small steps with their close horizontal lines and vex the eye. This Veerabhadra sikhara is beautiful. I feel the storeys could have been even nearer than they are at present.

*The expansion of the temple :*

The temples of the Viṇayavira period have a garbhāalaya, and sukanāsi of equal width. These are usually four feet above the ground level. Getting down four or five steps from the sukanāsi we come into a closed and pillared double ardhnamandapa. This is wider than the sukanāsi, being not more than three its width. On its three sides, at their centre, are door ways. Crossing its main door, we come out to the open pillared hall the mukhamandapa. For the three small temples on the hill at Lepakshi Virupanna built one single closed ardhnamandapa. It was not possible to raise three of them, each for one temple. So, all the three had only one ardhnamandapa. Virupanna would have visited the Sri Saṅga temple. He liked the chief sculptor on its boundary wall and got similar panels sculptured on the outer surface of the ardhnamandapa walls. Whether the raised platform or pīṭha round that mukhamandapa was made to level the ground or on the hill, or in imitation of the Hoysala (Chalukyan), temples, is not known, but the 'wooden' ornamentation of squares on the inner surface of the double bent cornice of this Veerabhadra, as seen in Hoysala temple, would make us believe that it is only in accordance with the Hoysala practice. Before the ardhnamandapa we see the mukhamandapa, the open pillared hall. With this, the usual appendages, garbhāalaya ardhnamandapa and nāṭyamandapa were complete. Intending to build the boundary wall after the Sri Saṅga example, he built the geṇṇa and starting the wall from its eastern side, completed it on the northern, eastern and southern sides of the temples. He built a big door-way in the southern wall and added an entrance mandapa to it. Virupanna probably intended this wall as the outer wall for the temple, he provided it with battlements on the northern part. The wall in Sri Saṅga is like this only. With the completion of the mukhamandapa, the temple took shape and festivals were started. King Atchutaraya visited the temple and donated two villages, Atchutarayendrapura and Kalipura to finance the car festival (These gifts as well as Virupanna's own are recorded on

this outer wall). Virupanna felt encouraged, got plenty of stone quarried from the same hill to make a pond, and constructed another stone enclosure, and gopur is on its eastern, western and northern centres. He added a trichuttu mandapa on its inner side. If we enter the temple through its eastern doorway, the earlier boundary wall faces us, not if we enter from the western. Opposite the western gateway, within the temple, he built a four-pillared pill-mandapa. Devotees coming to the temple from old Lepakshi enter through the western gate. So a pond was dug at the foot of the hill on that side and a mandapa raised at its centre. Some historians suggested that the Kalyana mandapa and the Iti mandapa were wanting. As these were to be within the first boundary wall, the place to the west of its southern gateway had to be raised high. These mandapas had to be built on the four pillars. A square mandapa lost its importance. He didn't mind it. Raised platforms, four at the Kalyana and Iti mandapas. At the south-west corner of the temple, he built a water tower. Built two pillars on the hill and mandapas at the foot of the hill and so did to make the temple surrounded by seven hundred pillars as in Sri Rangan. Got the bull idols as sculptured out of the rock and placed them on the roof of the outer surface of the roofs of the Ardhamandapa, prakara mandapa, bed chamber, etc. etc. with the gopuram. Where then, could he find funds for all this lavishing splendours? He spent the state funds. King Achyuta Raja summoned him to answer. Virupanna came to receive what he had done. His eyes would be plucked out by the king's orders. He inflicted that punishment on himself, plucked out his eyes and hit them on a wall in the Kalyana mandapa. We see even today, two small holes and angles resembling dried up biological liquid flowing out, on that wall. The legends say that these were caused by Virupanna's smashed eye balls. Whatever might have been the truth for Kalyana mandapa with a thousand pillars and the hill without, remain incomplete to this day.

## II. ARCHITECTURE OF LEPAESHI

*Letter of the Bureau:*

The architecture of Lepakshi is known only the important vimana type. The temple of Paapanashvara, even that, without the *skhalana*, may be of western Chalukya in origin, but nothing else at Lepakshi is older. The Bhīṣmaśaktina *prati* to the eastern stone wall of the temple could be a Chola relief (even as all the figures in bas-relief on the left wall of the main prabhavardhana Mankanteswara temple at Kalahasti). It is reported that had a male figure (the Kūrmāyāyana) on its east are the two feet of a sage. They could be the feet of a Jain deity or a *śiṣya*, Yogi, or a divine being. Bana kings of śaivite affiliation were ruling in Parigi just ten miles away. But the brachidore sculpture so widespread in and about Parigi is not to be seen in Lepakshi. The poanavatti of Paapanashvara is circular, not square like the ones made by Western Chalukyas. The Saṅkara temple built at Bakṣavayanaṇḍam in the first half of the fourteenth century is also round. The linga of that temple, now in the Śiva temple of Anantapur, is said to be a Bana type. May be, the Paapa nashvara and the paraghniya are both after Bana types.

*Arcthemundana* :

Temples were provided with closed *prahmandapa*s even in the times of Badami Chalukyas. Several of their temples were complete with *gambhīrāṇa*, *sāṭhāṇa* and *ardhamandapa*s alone. It was in the Vijayanagar period that the *mukha-mandapa* developed before the *ardhamandapa* and annexed its importance or prominence. Who would worry about the sanctity for its within a closed *mandapa*? This might be the reason for carvers as well as architects adorning the outer surface of the *ardhamandapa* of the Hoysaleswara and Chennakesava of Kenduvalli's form. Reliefs developed even on the exterior wall of the *prahmandapa*. And even in the temple of Govardha, Remalingeswara of Tadipatri and Narasimha of Penelunka and not how ever catch up this ornamentation, the last two were probably earlier than *prahmandapa*. *Śaṭbhūṣaṇa* tower came to its own on Chennakesava temple of Pushpagiri, Sri Rameswara and Veerabhadra temple of Bhadrachalam, Venkateswara of Tadipatri and Chennakesava of Chikkaballāsa. This system, too, the inner wall of the *prahmandapa* to that of the *gambhīrāṇa* too. In Lepakshi, we see relief sculpture only on the eastern, northern and western exterior walls of the *ardhamandapa*, but not on its southern one.

*Min. Panninaka :*

Mukhamandapa is usually a square which will be situated before the ardhamandapa with a width equal to it. In the Chintalar temple at Tadipatri it is oblong in shape, though in Somapalem, Kadiri, Pennachobalam and many other places it is a square. In Lepakshi, the temple was built on a hill and hence arose the necessity of using space just as it was available. The mukhamandapa became a long rectangle spread from east to west with the width continuing the ardhamandapa. We see ten rows of pillars in the length and seven rows in the width. The pillars at its northern edge are double pillars, about

twenty feet in height. These are all of hard granite. This material is not so easy to be shaped on the lathe, as chloritic schists. A slightly broader bit on the chisel in the crystals in this stone would get eat out. That might be the reason for shaping the granite pillars into rectangular slabs and not into cylinders on the lathe. The decoration—some beams on the heads of the pillars and the formation of a smooth undersurface from the top surface of the roof must have been more preplanned than discovered after the event. The rough undersurface was made smoother by cutting compression and the whole area polished. The floors as old Kāṭṭas employed the mud-plastic black soil of very fine grain, and covered it with a layer of plaster with thin lime up to dust and color of dispiritis. Delicate carving is not possible with this. So, the carvings which are observed to show parings in Lepakshi, and in many other temples, temples like those at Hampi, Karugudi, Chippagudi, Somapalem etc. Visitors are shown a carved stone in a room which does not completely rest on the floor at its lower end. Maybe the pillar is attached to the beam matrix by cement or mortar. Cement was not known then and mortar could not hold pillars that were new. The Chudakāś built their temple walls by fitting, smooth, big pieces. The Kāṭṭas and Rāḍḍas are famous for obtaining a close-fit of stones. We don't see an iron pin holding the pillar to the floor pillar at its bottom. If it were hanging slightly higher up some veins had been run in the walls and it might have been knicked down to its present position, how could it have been built up? Maybe it was broken in the beam matrix at its top and the floor under it sunk an inch or two down to make it accept the mud floor carrying the floor-slabs.

### *Gopuram*

We see two steps to the roof of the ardhmandapa opposite to the door of the ardhmandapa. Getting down the steps we reach the second gopuram. The usual Vaisṇava ketiśś adorn the lower inner ends of the four pilasters. The carvings are of good quality. The outer faces of the door jambs are not similar either. The two gopurams are of different heights. The one on the left. The left one is dancing around the other which stands on the right axis. The left gopuram is opposed to the traditions of sculpture. The right gopuram is of a style which is not necessary for these departures.

### *The Prabhavali*

Before the door of the ardhmandapa is a small shrine where the Varahapada worshipping the linga and a lotus with the lotus petals. The lotus petals are of different sizes. We don't see the royal symbols, Varaaha, Sword, the Sun and the Moon, the Ketikāś, the Chudakāś, the Paracāś and the Idiparti. This temple was not built by the members of the royal family. Opposite to the gopuram we find two pedestals of the dhvajastambam. Inscriptions of the stone on the pedestals are in the same style as those of the Jaina temples, we feel these were built probably by the same person. The Varahapada temples have stone pillars before them as at Somapalem, Chippagudi, Ponnur, etc. etc. but not of the white covered wooden pillars as now. We find a small wall with a door in front of the temple set in the north. What could have these pedestals carried if they were come upon immediately with the lotus petals? These are in the first perambulatory path, between the two boundary walls. We see the northern outer gopuram when we pass by these and come out. We learn that this gopuram was hit by a storm and broke down. The door-jambs are not ornamented at all. But the boundary wall enclosing this gopuram runs around the temple. This one is the only complete boundary wall. The mandapa outside the gopuram is very ordinary, with plain pillars. This gopuram is not directly

before the inner one but behind it. The villagers say that this displacement was intended to avoid the direct looks of the enraged god Veerabhadra. The outer boundary wall was made out of red mud and rubble, faced with smoothened stone slabs on either side, and thinner at its upper edge than at the lower one. Near the ground, it is nearly three feet thick. Chalukyas built their temple walls too in this fashion at Alampur. The boundary wall of Sri Sailam and the one round the royal mansions at Vijayanagar were made similarly. On these walls were constructed flat miniature gopuras by way of ornamentation. In *Pallava* architecture, we see smaller gopuras adorning the Central big one, in a three dimensional pattern. That practice gave place to a two dimensional ornamentation of the surface of the gopura in the Chola and Vijayanagar temples. These miniature gopuras on a wall and above the cornice of a mandapa are characteristic of Vijayanagara architecture. We find them in this Iepakshi temple and also in the temple constructed by Virupanna's brother at Goravanahalli.

#### *Watch tower*

If we go round the temple outside this second wall, we see a watch tower at a distance of fifteen yards from the south-west corner. Virupanna knew the danger that could befall a temple. When we mark this watch tower, the pond within the temple and the battlements on the inner boundary wall, we feel that Virupanna intended these for the defence of the temple. Sri Sailam temple has the battlements too, for the same purpose.

#### *Perambulatory paths :*

One can go round the temple outside the second praakara wall. Entering the temple through the gopura in this wall on its north, one can go round the temple either in the raised *tiruchittu maala* or along the perambulatory path below it. As one adopts this path, he will have the first boundary wall to his right, and the raised mandapa to his left lined by the characteristic double pillars of the Vijayanagar period. In the east about half way from the corner, one sees a record on the rock forming the floor. It is not usual for any dynasty to inscribe a record on the floor. We see on the Gutti hill two inscriptions of the Western Chalukyas. As we proceed further south, and turn round to the west, the boundary wall disappears and we see the ruined Kalyanamandapa instead, on our right. Following the mandapa adjoining the second wall to our left, we can go to the south-west, turn north, reach the northern first gopura and thus complete this second perambulation. In between the Kalvanamandapa and the western boundary wall, the space in which the pond is excavated slants to the west. We see the four legged tall Vijayanagar mandapa in this space very near the latamandapa. Why this was raised, is difficult to make out. We see such mandapas outside the temple opposite to a gopuras in Tirumala, Mylapore, Kanchi and other south Indian temples. No symmetry can be identified with this mandapa standing close to the raised base of the Kalyana and Lata mandapas. We do not see any flight of steps to reach this either. This is not exactly before the Paapanaasheshvara, facing the west. Near this mandapa or its north, we see shallow carving on the rock-floor resembling plates and dishes used for taking meal. These are only six, and thus they could not have helped to serve meals to the labourers. Just to the west of these, is the pond excavated for stone, more than for any other purpose. From within the mukhamandapa, we can commence another perambulation before the main door of the ardhmandapa on the pial, proceed eastward, get down steps and turn to the south, turn to the west near the big nagalinga, pass by the side of Ganesha, keep close





*Evolution of the pillar :*

Decorative material is another vault in the sculptural treasure of Lepakshi. Ninety percent of this precious material is on the pillars. The sculpture, which opened its eyes in the Telugu country very early is pillar sculpture. It appeared at Jagayyapet to cover the baldness of the joints of marble slabs in on the vertical Vedic surface of the stupas erected there. Later, at Amaravati, the long wavy floral garland, the soap-bubble-bellied kumbhandas, symbols of the important incidents of the Buddha's life, thousand petalled lotuses, dharmachakras, vijras, triratnas, many hooded snakes, added taste to the Buddhist anecdotes, by their decorative value. The Jains, who 'occupied' the Telugu country alongside the eastern Chalukyas eschewed worldly pomp and pleasure and prevented the growth of sculpture for nearly four centuries. Though discernibly different amongst themselves, the Jain teerthankara figures of that period were monotonously naked and devoid of any decoration. The western Chalukyas, who ruled over a large part of western Andhra with Badami and Kalyan as their capitals, got the basements of their temples filled by relief sculptures of the Avatars, and the pillar surfaces by narrative sculptures at Vemulavada, Pedu Tumbalam, and Alampur and thereby added some beauty. Use of the decorative sculpture on pillars was a characteristic western Chalukyan contribution. The pillar sculptures at Undavalli show this Chalukyan influence in the carvings of Jyothulingas and avatars. Sculptured hands ran round the four rectangular faces of red sandstone pillars, at approximately equal distances. These hands showed traditional puranic stories and legends of Ramayana and Sivapurana very clearly and distinctly. Decoration of the surface of pillars is seen at Ajanta too. After the Badami Chalukyas, the credit for improving pillar sculpture should go to the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas. They used blackstone, which was of finer grain than sandstone and hence less brittle. Turning a pillar about a horizontal axis on a lathe and filling the length of the pillar with cylindrical lengths of different diameter became possible. Some length of the pillars could be square in section, a cylindrical length could alternate between smaller octagonal bands. The four sides of the flat surface could carry relief sculpture, and smaller bands decorative motifs. Square, octagonal and circular bands framed by uniform strips, vertical bands across octagonal and circular surfaces and happy variety in mixing these converted pillar sculpture into a particular chapter of sculpture. The Reddi Kings of Kondaveedu and Rajahmundry made a special contribution by enlarging the figure sculpture attached to pillars to almost the natural size. The temples at Daksharama, Sarpavaram, Korukonda and Palvula show the sculptured portraits of kings and their associates, attached to stone pillars. The emperors of Vijayanagar filled the surfaces of square pillars with a profusion of sculpture and got the edges of the paralleliped stone blocks placed on the top of the pillars moulded as lotus buds with points downwards. (At Ajanta these edges curve upwards). These can be marked in the Hajaarama temple at Vijayanagar, and the Madhavaswami temple of Gorantla. These were the final forms of blackstone pillars. Blackstone could not be quarried in huge lengths nor transported without breaking. Granite quarrying had to be done out of sheer necessity of building high halls and Verandahs. The hall before the Ganapati temple at Hampi is a typical example of a high hall. White granite pillars of a height of twelve feet and above are erected vertically and stone beams run over them. Slabs are spread to bridge over these and the resulting high hall gets well ventilated and lighted. The pillars of the mukhamandapa in Lepakshi are of the same height and are divided into three parts by two octagonal bands running horizontally, showing variety.

*Decorative pillar sculpture :*

The sculptural decoration of these pillars is beautiful. Three currents: saivism, contemporary culture, and joy of life appear to be in confluence in this decoration. If Virupanna was a Veera Saivite, he



[illegible][illegible]

Congratulations on the independence of the Republic started in the mandapa is constructed by Ruddy kinnari, Pukhri and the kinnari. The Kinnari of Mammashakti and his consort were hence carved separately. The kinnari were carved by cutting rock into holes. In Lepakshi pillar was placed the pillar of the temple and for a historic conception of an assembly of such pillar is mentioned that three literate people were each holding a pillar in the manyamandapa. The pillars of the mandapa were placed by the Vedic Brahmins. Prayers of instruments and dancers gathered from different parts and a number of performers in the entire event were to arrive all alone. The Hindu sculptors have provided the pillars in the temple. The four sumptuously decorated pillars were the pillars of the temple. The Lord, but the Lepakshi sculptors alone provided the accompanying temple to the temple. Pukhri and the kinnari were carving the kinnari dancers trying to imitate the smaller princess in the temple. Pukhri and the kinnari were carving the kinnari dancers trying to imitate the smaller princess in the temple. Pukhri and the kinnari were carving the kinnari dancers trying to imitate the smaller princess in the temple. But we need to ask to imagine what happened in the success of the temple. This is why the temple at Lepakshi. The celestial dancer comes here every night and starts in the temple. The Lord, Brahma starts from that corner being time with his track and try to imitate. Sambhava his head sways from there. Thumbura and Nandase and then the kinnari. The five kinnari Panchamukha Brahma beats his drum. Nandi starts the jatholi and Nandi gives the signal by biting up his foot. Moon starts the song. What more does he want? She looks at herself in her dance. When the rays of dawn peep into the mandapa from her left, she wakes up from the stupor, reflects where she is and suddenly disappears. All these episodes pettily in a moment, unmindful of the peculiar of their pose. That is why the pipe is so near in the mouth of Sun. Thumbura looks to his wife surprised at the sudden cessation of the activity. Nandi and Moon put their Veena to their shoulder. Nandi and Veena Brahma have not returned to normalcy.

The Kildan or *Landap* of Lepkshih is also a pettied group of celestials, this group being visitors to Sundaresvara and Parvati, new brides of Kulkoti. Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Ishana find at their corners. Brahma, Dharmadatta, the Rishis, and Narayana have come. Who else could congratulate the couple? The pleas of gathering at the Kuika (Shiva) on the top of the Himalayas takes place at Lepkshih every moment.

*Last word in pillar sculpture*

The sculptor of Gopakshi has not stopped with this. He carved four pillars of the mukhamandapa and four of the ndhamandapa into sculpture in the round on this side, that side and the third, changing the pillars into sculptures outright. The south Indian sculptor made huge square pillars carrying on their tops, bracket pieces radiating to all sides and astonishes the onlooker with those mere pillars, in the Vitthala temple of Hampi, Kuthirai, Jambukesvaram and Orayoor to mention a few places. The Andhra sculptor

of the Virupannar temple elevated the pillars into columns of sculptures to inspire the devotees at Lepakshi and the art of depicting the celestial forms to pillars reached its perfection at Lepakshi. To say 'The pillars of Lepakshi become sculpture' is to say only a half truth. 'Sculptured figures stand so close together, that pillars carrying them have vanished, is the full truth.

The Udamandapa of Lepakshi is singularly unique. One would wonder if this is another version of the thousand pillared mandapa added to later temples. This one of forty pillars is to the south-west of the temple. Each pillar is four-sided and all the four sides carry the sculptures of creepers of several kinds. The suggestion that this garden of flowering creepers, was intended for the newly wed Uma and Shankar is inescapable. Otherwise there would not be any significance for so many of the pillars supporting creepers. These creepers have flowers and fruits and birds perched on the twigs. This idea of a garden of creepers is not developed further. What a pity!

#### *Relief sculpture on walls :*

Though not appearing very prominent at Lepakshi, wall sculpture is seen on the outer walls of the ardhnamandapa. We see some sculpture on the outer walls of the temples built by Krishnaraya but the figures appear one here and one there, they do not form groups. This kind of sculpture starts on the Hajararama temple at Hampi. While returning from his eastern campaign, the great king visited Sri Sailam. Relief sculpture spread like light on the outer boundary wall of that temple. May be the emperor liked that sculpture and got the outer walls of Hajararama and the 'dasara platform' filled with relief sculptures. This sculpture has caught much of the enthusiasm of the Sri Sailam people. Virupanna was a Veera Saivite. He got the outer walls of the Veerabhadra ardhnamandapa filled with panthe sculpture. The Ramayana stories depicted on the outer walls of Hajararama embody small sized figures. Virupanna has imported the elephant group of Sri Sailam with all their poses and sizes. Above the row of elephants, we see the story of Chirtonda on the east and Kirataarijuneeya on the west. Siva's boon to Siriyaala, birth of Chirtonda, the arrival of Chirtonda, the arrival of Chirtonda's head, the dinner, removal of Chirtonda, appearance of Parvati and Parimevati on their nandi vehicle are all well depicted. In the Kirataarijuneeya story commencing from the south-west corner, we see Narada, telling the Pandavas to try and obtain divine asthras, Arjuna starting to do penance, Indra restore his trophy in disguise, Arjuna's penance, worship of the linga, the arrival of the boon, the duel between Arjuna and Karna, their boxing bout and the appearance of Parvati and Parimevati on their nandi. These bring us to the main door. This relief sculpture is not just an inspired narration. Arjuna's penance balanced on one leg, and the arrow fight of Siva and Arjuna are quite artistic. If time and money had been available, the outer walls of the boundary wall of Lepakshi would have been filled with Saivite stories like those of Sri Sailam. The present niches containing lion faces are the only indications of that tendency here. The pair of fish in the south-east and the Sun towards the north of the western wall are probably traditional markings of the sculptors. Relief sculpture later than Lepakshi has increased in extent gradually but lost the artistic value. The relief sculpture later than Lepakshi has increased in extent gradually but lost the artistic value. The relief sculpture at Tadipatri, Chukkalooru and Penukonda is just a narration, not art at all.

#### *Figure sculpture :*

It is figure sculpture in Lepakshi that had raised its standard. The Chalukyas had the celestial forms carved in high relief above the parikara or supporting back plank, and installed them in niches. The

back plank is not easily distinguishable due to the mounting in niches. We see such sculptures in Pattadakal in the west as well as Biccavol and Yelamanchili in the east. The Hoysalas got fuller figures carved but fixed them in the walls only. Their attention appears to have perfected jewellery but not so much artistic shape. The Vijayanagara sculptors used granite stone and so, could not put in big niches in the walls nor big figures in those niches. Where could figure sculpture have come to prominence? Only with the pillars. Long and thick shafts of stone are any way to be quarried for the pillars. And variety of carving has any way to be exhibited. If a big sized figure is carved with every pillar, figure sculpture would abound as pillar decoration. The sculptor of Lepakshi appears to have caught at this idea and worked the figures on the pillar faces to their perfection. That was why he did not very much mind developing the relief sculpture on the walls.

#### *Sculptures on the pillars :*

Figure sculpture was developed by the Chalukyas. But their figures retained the rigidity of the Pallava sculpture, from which they derived. When we inspect the niche sculpture of the Virupaksha at Pattadakal, we find the figures standing on rigid stony legs in spite of an Ardhanariswara bending his neck this side or a Nataraja folding his leg that side. The suppleness seen in the figures depicting relief anecdotes on the pillars there, is not found in the big figures of the deities. The eastern Chalukyas who imitated the western Chalukyas in their niche sculptures, got them made in stiff-standing figures at Biccavol and later at Yelamanchili. The western Chalukyas took fancy for getting the stories from Panchatantra and Dasaavatara traditions on the friezes of the basements of temples. It was also their tradition to introduce their deity in the centre of the lower face of mandapa roofs and the lords of the eight corners on their vehicles at the eight corners of that face. The vehicles are big sized and appear to have been made to scale, proportionate to the sizes of the riders, supposing them to be human. In Ganjigitti these dikpaalakas sit on the vehicles with their wives behind them. The couples look like guhyakas, not even like ordinary humans. The Vanavasi dikpaalakas are comparable in size, to their vehicles. Here in Lepakshi, the dikpaalakas are about four and a half feet tall. They stand stiff in their vertical positions, lean on their left leg and their right leg is slightly bent in a gentle release (That is why the knee-caps are seen with clear outlines). The vehicles are of tiny sizes and are shown below the feet as symbols. The helmets here do not end in the shape of a kalasha as those at Vanavasi do. On either side of the tall diadems ornamentation resembling plaited hair is seen. In Chola sculpture, flames turning upward are seen in the same position. Here and there the hands are fixed at the hip in the Katibaddha posture, as in the Pallava and Chola sculptures. The garments reach, not upto the heels but only up to the knees. The ankles however carry the round and wavy rings. The poses and realistic delineation deny that these figures follow the western Chalukyan sculptures. Those are representations of tradition and symbolism. These are realistic forms, which do not break the traditions of sculpture. The makara toranas, the lion-face in their centre and the ornamentation by diadems have all been used by Kadambas. But their figures look like scare-crows, while these appear to be realistic.

#### *Hoysala sculpture ?*

The Hoysalas, who ruled from Halebid got done decorative sculpture by the file and not with the chisel. Their figure sculpture looks like, not cut out of the stone but cast with it. They lack delicacy

but are quite alive. No one is frozen in a rigidly posed. If any one releases this leg or that, bends the knee forward, shifts the feet, the right and left arms, with vehemence. If, by chance a lady is not to be seen in a frontal pose, she is shifted to the left and the other forward to achieve that much variety of disposition. The pose is, on the whole, but like a common people. The Hoysala sculptors seem not to have sought the ideal of the gods. Their figures are not found to be extant in the full name of varada, abhaya, kirtimukha, etc. All the gods and other deities are marked by the marks they made in stone and are clothed in the traditional robes of the deities. Some wear crown jewels. Even their weapons are jeweled (the sword, the bow). Their arms are tied to the waist in garlands or wrist bands, and to the knees or feet in necklaces. The arm rings of men are often comparable to the size of their heads! The crown and the ornaments worn are not to be missed. If God were to choose to make the Hoysala deities like their counterparts, he would take off their jewelry and decorations. One would doubt if the influence of Buddhist art in the west coast of India or of Hov. (We Indians) art, but the contemporary Afghan, Pandyan and Chola art are better than ours. One may credit the Hoysala artists with the fullest self-expression of their skill and craftsmanship. The Tepakshi figures may have borrowed the wrist band jewelry from the Hoysala figures, their poses, none and the rest, but do not resemble them in general. These are unlike the Andhra, not short and stout like the Kuntal boys and Hoysala figures. Their faces are not round but oval faced. Their jewelry are necklaces, golden bands in face. Their weapons are weapons not of all conventional Hoysala type. Their poses, *in general*, are natural, but not adjusted for showing some ideal difference with appearance.

### *Chola Sculptures*

The Tepakshi figures are more reminiscent to the Chola figures. Their Kirtibandha hasta is not popular with these figures as with the abhaya and varada mudras. The attitude of these is the same as that of their counterparts. The necks are not as broad as theirs, while the Chola figures have petrifed bodies, these are not. There is a not a wide chola shalimar as the Chola ones do, their dress extends down to their ankles. The folds in the attire of sculptures of Cholas are just like the folds seen in paintings. The carvings of their faces in the temple are a handsome and Chola style of the Tirumala temple do. The helmets, however, are not the most common variety of the Varaha or a type, but are the usual traditional types of sculptures. Unlike most of the Chola sculptures in their one arm are folded upwards and turning in the palm of the other, the Chola sculptures are not in delicately curved poses. They stand like they do in Andhra.

### *Imperial Sculptures*

The figure sculptures of Tepakshi is Imperial sculpture. It is the complex sculpture resulting from the confluence of all previous styles. The traditional manner of the decoration of the western Chalukyas, the waist jewelry of the Hoysala, the rigid poses of the Cholas, and contemporary realism have all joined in this and are well mixed up. The Tepakshi sculptors saw the originals but did not simply follow their rules. Indra holds the Varas in both hands! Vishnu's varas does not show the varada and abhaya hastas, but holds a bird in one palm and kees the other clinging to his thigh. Varuna holds paashas in both hands, the rishis show kirtibandha hastas following the tradition. Trimurti has four hands! Vishnu misses his garuda vehicle! Anirupurush is on his cloud vehicle. One or two figures do not have any identification marks. One is called Parvati, another called Narayana. One holds

a vessel, he is said to be Dhruvantari. Some say he is Parvataraja giving away his daughter Parvati in marriage. Should it not be Menkakadevi, Parvati's mother who holds the vessel pouring a jet of water for kanyadanna? The sculptors described the divine ladies with as lavish a praise as their poet contemporaries did. All ladies have 'eyes which rival the pride of the lotus petals'. If the legs of one or two figures like those of Kubera and Sunda are overlooked, all are beautiful figures. Poetic ladies with 'fulsome hips' and 'disappearing waists' do not show to present an ugly contrast to these beautiful belles. The jewelry does not prove a shackle and if we overlook the Ketibandha hasta of a mendicant here or there, chiselling is also never too bad.

### *Sculpture of the Adhamandapa.*

The sculptures on the pillars of the closed hall before the sancta are any day the crest jewels of Andhra sculpture. We can easily mark that the pillars of the circumambulatory nandapa, the creeper garden, the front (open) hall, the dance hall and the marriage pavilion have been carved by different sculptors, from the relief sculpture flowing on those. The figures carved by the same sculptor show resemblance. Roopabhedha or variety of form was marked no doubt by our artisans as one of the six limbs of painting, but the one feature which was never perfect in Indian painting as well as sculpture is variety of form. The variety of appearance at Lepakshi is not worth mentioning. So we find resemblance in the sculptures done by the same sculptor, and from these, we can surmise that those were done by one sculptor. The master sculptor of Lepakshi carved the Nataraja and the bull vehicle on the pillars in the south-east of the closed hall, the Tripurasam samhara and dancing Ganapati in its south-west, Durga and Mrutyunjaya in the north-west and Rambha and Nalakoobara in its north-east. We are lucky that these were relief sculptures (though on very high relief): if they had been done in the round, they would all have sailed away from India. Mahadeva yielded the bow only to kill Tripuraasuras and so he is easily identified. But when Isvara is carved as a piercing fearful figure with a javelin (Mahishamar-dani is also seen on the same pillar), he is called Mrutyunjaya by the local people. When the victim is not Yama, how is this figure a Mrutyunjaya? Above this composition is seen a small sized devotee worshipping a Siva-linga. He might have brought Markandeya to the popular mind and so they say that this is the story of Markandeya. I am not convinced with this interpretation. I think it could be Andhaka Samhara. We see a similar figure painted on the roof, and Markandeya is not there. The sculptures in this closed hall are dynamic and their modelling is similar. Otherwise they would not form a homogeneous group. Nataraj folds up his leg just like the Chola Nataraj but as a group, these figures do not resemble the Chola ones at all. The nose-cut of Chola figure is characteristically vertical and infuses divinity into the figures and devotion into the visitor. The nose cuts of these figures spring forward. There is a patent dynamism in their poses and steadfast determination in all these faces. Rambha and Nalakoobara see some light from that corner-window, otherwise all are in the dark materially and metaphorically. It has become a practice with visitors and the local people to name this pair as a Padmini lady and Paanchaalapurusha, best specimens of a woman and a man respectively. I feel they are Rambha and Nalakoobara. This latter has delicate and very small tusks at either end of his mouth. Paanchaalapurusha does not have tusks, and Vishnu-dharmottara endows Nalakoobara with tusks. A friend said that it is tradition to put in Vaastupurusha in the north-east of the temple. I have yet to see a sculpture of Vaastupurusha and I am not able to believe that this one is that. The lady by his side--the imagined, Padmini is in the dress of a dancer, she is just like the Holi dancers sculptured on the 'Throne mound', in a sari wound closely round her legs down to her ankles and a skirt with vertical folds reaching to her knees. This is the



desecrated by candle-dimmers in the night up to this day. Rambha is not a Rakshasi in origin, she has not been established as such by the Yashastambha standing on with a crocodile and try to make her Ganga, her legs and her body and her crown to the contrary. In Lepakshi sculpture when we do not see *Gangadhara* as a goddess, we must be disappointed. If we want to make her *Vastupurusha*, *Vastupurusha* is not a goddess. If the consort of *Vastupurusha* is a deity, I have no idea. If then, one must see *Krishna* and *Nalaka* but we do not see the universality in the *Vishvakathana* and *Gangadhara*. I have no idea in the matter of the lack of harmony to these figures on the pillars. This is a great loss and I am very sorry the *Kaviraj* for a sign of reverence and worship. The *Chola* and *Vijayanagar* sculpture. It is usual for western writers to cite the *Chola* and *Vijayanagar* sculpture as a couple of the standard of the *Vijayanagar* sculpture, they did not probably see the *Rambha* of *Lepakshi*. In *Chola* and *Vijayanagar* sculpture over that static picture. The *Chola* and *Vijayanagar* sculpture are not much to *Lepakshi* *Rambha*. The *Vijayanagar* poet tried to portray the *Rambha* of *Lepakshi* by exaggeration of *Rambha* but described in truth their disproportion and combination of *Rambha* and *Nalaka*. The *Vijayanagar* sculptor, however, succeeded in that attempt at *Lepakshi*.

### *Relief Sculpture*

The *Chola* sculpture is powerful and of *Buddha* *Chakras* *Chakra*. *Hoysala* sculpture abound in jewellery and *Vijayanagar* sculpture breathes life. *Beaumont* sculpture, decorative sculpture or figure sculpture etc. is a great eye in *Chola* life. *Lepakshi* sculpture is a great consciousness of *Sri Sakti* sculpture and the *Siva* *virgins*. The poses of *Chola* sculpture are from there. The *Nalaka* and *Vijayanagar* sculpture are from there. The *Chola* sculpture of the *Chola* and *Vijayanagar* closed high night very well have been done by *Chola* sculptors reported to *Sri Sakti*. *Siva* of *Lepakshi* wears a *diadem* and a *skull* and a long *garland* of *skull* and *skull* to *Krupadika* *Siva* without sacrifices has saturated *Lepakshi*. This way of the influence of *Sri Sakti* *Lepakshi* is however not seen at *Lepakshi*. We do not see the other offshoot of that school of *Chola* sculpture seen at *Mahabharata* and *Sri Sakti* not the *Chola* at the top of the *Chola* *Siva* *virgins*. However, it is obviously the *Krupadika* cult of *Sri Sakti* that fostered *Lepakshi* *Chola* *Siva* *virgins*.

#### IV. PAINTING IN LIPAKSHI

##### *Ajanta*

By the end of the sixth century the painting of the viharas of Ajanta stopped. When a hill is excavated and rectangular cave halls are made through its rocks and the space between the doorways appears bald. It is an easy and agreeable task to pave the walls and paint on them. As those caves were all Buddhist Viharas and Chaityas the painters filled them with the stories of Buddha's previous lives. In these paintings they depicted a lot of grace and enthusiasm but they excelled themselves in painting the female form. The invisible reins they applied to the bodily beauty show to the onlooker's mind not the youth and sex appeal but only woman-hood. Hence it happened that what all they did with the brush turned into beautiful story telling and preaching the Gospel of the Buddha. The painters of Ajanta were adepts in brush work, line drawing, decorative art and geometrical drawing. Through their industry a world famous shrine of art had arisen in the heart of India. The paintings in the Bagh caves tried to improve upon Ajanta's skill to a step higher by their attempt to show the three dimensions in the faces but lost the grace of Ajanta by the use of blackish brown for the body color and grey for the palms. The beauty achieved in depicting grace in Ajanta was trampled down by the realism in Bagh. The paintings of Bagh consequently look like the merry-making of a once prosperous race met in the darkness of night to count time.

##### *Sigiriya, Sittanna Vasal and Tanjore paintings*

The Sigiriya paintings in Ceylon show draughtsmanship more than any intention of the painter. The reddish tints, carings, delicacy of the fingers, breast bands, and flying aprons indicate, however, that these paintings moved in the ambit of the Ajanta art. The paintings in Sittanna Vasal were Jain. The Jains were essentially realistic in matters of life. The delicacy of the painted characters of Ajanta weighed down by the austere serenity of Jain rules of conduct, the smiling beauty of flowers lingering only as worship-worthiness, the animals and birds retaining their forms only in the likeness of their outlines, have pulled down the painting of Sittanna Vasal from the high pedestal of artistic excellence. The surviving patches of Badami caves show the patterns of Ajanta only. The Ellora paintings, with the asymmetry of the ear ornaments, delicacy of the fingers, flexible outlines and reds remind us of Ajanta, while the war scenes indicate new trends of including the contemporary atmosphere. The Ajanta personalities appear grown opulent in the Tanjore paintings. Though not all over, realism spread to a good extent in all these schools. The persons in these paintings are not the offspring of the creative imagination of the painter, but some grace has covered them like shimmering moonlight. They do not express, in cent per cent, the joy of life but they are persons of the world. The change we wish should come over all these, namely the feeling and expression, is seen clearly in Konark temple sculpture, especially in the drummers, but not in any later painting. But the long and large eyes, graceful fingers, thrice bent postures, decoration, and asymmetry of ear ornaments of Ajanta got into the Pallava and Chola sculptures. It would appear that those who did the sculptured bands round the temple pillars of Alampur were the Ajanta sculptors—nay

the painters. The kings did not bestow as much attention on painting as on sculpture, probably due to the relatively short life of painting. But in treatises on art, we see plenty of discourse on painting.

*Abhilashita-ardha chintamani :*

Somadeva III described to some extent, the method of preparing a wall for painting on it. The wall, he says, should be covered by a layer of the mixture of mud, dung and husk and made soft for a coverage by shell chunam or *sudha*. This should be covered by an ointment and made smooth to carry the painting. Ointments were of several kinds. One of those was Vajralepa, made by mixing conch-shell powder and sugar to the gelly formed by boiling a fresh buffalo skin (and this for its fat) in water. We could see that the hard layer formed by the setting of the calcium carbonate of the shell and the Jaggery is rendered soft on its surface by the bovine fat and becomes fit for painting. On such a surface, says that author, an outline is to be drawn with a crayon made from the soft mass formed by grinding together lamp soot and powdered rice. This invisible outline is made visible by earth-red colour applied by a brush. We see such red outlines of originally planned poses of the palms, in the Sigiria pictures. To render the outline distinct and clear, color is to be applied later. One brush is to be employed for applying the color, another for obtaining the harmony of the limbs and another for fine drawing. Conch-shell powder for whites, lacjuice and rocks for reds, arsenic sulphide for yellows, soot for blacks and coloured rocks ground on moistened stone for other tints, were employed by the painters. All these are earth colours and retain tints for centuries. It is likely that Somadeva's record was done to save the traditions of the fast disappearing practice of fresco and mural painting, we do not see paintings even in Badami and Pattadakal not to talk of the more exposed Kalyananagar, Malkhed and Devagiri. The Ajanta tradition died a lingering death in the Tanjore and Kanchi paintings.

*Palm-leaf painting of the Jains :*

It was round about 1100 A.D., while Jayasimha ruled over the Gujerat, that decorative painting on palm-leaves started to be done. May be, the Jains saw the destruction of temples following Muslim invasions and tried to save their religious traditions and paintings by recording them in books. This tradition which started in the books like *Shatkaandaagama* (A.D. 1120), *Jnaatasootra* (1127 A.D.), *Dashavaikalika lighuvritti* (A.D. 1143), *Oghaniryukti* (1161 A.D.), assumed its fulsome form in poems like *Subahu's story*. This practice, which started with the painting of the pictures of the Theerthankaras only, developed into painting the life histories of the theerthankaras, the shaasanadevatas, and the charyas of the Jain monks. In the early days, these paintings were done on palm-leaves and birch wood but by the sixteenth century they appeared on papers and cloth thus establishing a prominent tradition in North India. This school of miniature painting used a red background. They abound in the beauty of the line and showed two dimensions like figures made in cardboard. The profile was particularly chosen, and sharp pointed noses and chins marked by long outlines of the lower jaw and protrusion of the farther eye were characteristic. Numberless varieties of ornamental squares, design, and borders appear on sarees and drapery; bodies are painted each one in a single tint; hairs are rounded up into big spherical balls to one side of the head; standing figures lean backwards curving like stiff bows; ladies have heavy breasts, long eyes and disappearing waists. The ends of the aprons and other types of dress are pointed upwards ending in sharp angles. The black paint of the eyes of ladies stretches as a sharp line towards the ear, ringlets of hair come forward from behind the ear, and the ears are ornamented by big sized circular

dises. Trees and vegetation are just symbolic, not realistic. Animals are not proportional in size. Elephants stand with one of the front legs stiff and the other relaxing slightly.

The main features of this tradition are sharp noses and protrusion of the farther eye. The paintings on the middle layer on the walls of Kailasanatha temple in Ellora show Garuthmaan and Lakshmi with long and sharp noses and in some figures, the second eye appears only as the eye ball and lids without showing any more of that side of the face. These features made some critics feel that the Jain style of figure painting was not new but only a continuation of the later phases of Ellora painting. But we have to remember that the Jain paintings were made on palm-leaves. The Indian tradition is to first draw an outline of the figures with a line and sharp needle or thinduka. Thinduka was a pencil-like stick into one end of which was fixed a copper needle. When we look at the Jain miniatures through a magnifying glass we see that the outlines are not in continuous line. The lower line making the nose is absent in a number of pictures. The outline drawn with a needle becomes clear and patent, when a paint or lamp black is applied to it. The practice of drawing illustrations of the Ramayana and other epics on palm-leaf is to be found in Java and Bali and palm-leaf looks of such illustrations are seen in Indische Museum, Amsterdam. When one draws on a palm-leaf with a needle, the fibres of the leaf get cut, and when paint is applied, it spreads into the fibre too through the cut ends and this can be seen even with the naked eye. While drawing noses and farther eyes with a needle, if the artist were to cut curved lines, small pieces of the leaf bounded by cut fibre come off from the leaf, spoiling the picture. This might be the reason for the early artists of the palm-leaf manuscripts drawing the noses in a sharp angle and the outer eyes in a protruding angle. This long time habit might have been continued even on cloth or paper by later Jain painters. The new and peculiar base -- the palm-leaf -- with its fibre and limited width proved an inconvenient ceiling on the 'heads' of figures in Jain miniatures. To add to this, the Jains were nirgrantha, non-ornamental, non-artistic type of people. Too much beauty was not welcome with them. The painters were required to merely illustrate, and that, the stories of theerthankaras or perfect mendicants. Many figures did not have to be drawn, and the question of composition did not arise. Why then think of nature? This simplest of the simple styles was thus born and spread through Muslim north India. At the period of the founding of the Vijayanagar empire music and painting were not in a flourishing stage. The period of political respite following Atchutaraya's accession helped the growth of temples and painting on the inner roofs of the temple halls. The inspiration for this painting came from the Jaina painting mentioned above. That is the reason for speaking about them at length.

#### *Vijayanagar painting :*

The art of painting which faded out from Sittannavaasal and Tanjavoor in south India reappeared in the later Vijayanagar period. Not that there is no painting of the interim period found. Sri Waheed Khan (Director of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh), discovered three or four paintings on stone belonging to the votive temples at Alladurg in the Medak district. These show only the profile and frontal aspects of the figures painted. They wear short loin clothes and no dhoties, black garment being a peculiarity. We see no ornamental stripes or spots on the clothes, except on the tiger skin worn by Siva. Black, red ochre, yellow and light green are the colours used. Petticoats of the ladies of Sigiria and the Ajanta asymmetry of the ear ornaments testify to the continuity of earlier traditions of painting, but these paintings are not bold enough to signify the existence of a prominent school of painting in the Kakatiya or the Western Chalukyan times. We see some bits of painting at Pillalamarri but

they too were just casual, not purposeful. The inner roofs of the high halls made by laying long stone slabs form a flat plane and a thin layer lime mortar would make large areas suitable for painting. Granite stone is not convenient for relief sculpture as black stone is and hence this new opportunity for painting. Cave temples afforded large areas for painting with their flat roofs and plane wall space. When rock cutting gave place to constructional temples, painting had to disappear, it had no area to claim. Waiting to obtain large flat areas, painting found large plane areas on the inner roofs of Vijayanagar temple halls and settled there. We see painted roofs in Lepakshi Chippagiri, Somapalem, Hampi (Viroopaaksha), Kurugodu Macherla and Undavalli near Vijayawada. The roofs were first rendered plane for painting and painting was done even before the covering layers dried up. Colors were mixed in lime water and applied. The alkaline lime water absorbed the carbon di-oxide of the atmosphere and hardened as the Carbonate. This helped the pictures to last to this day. All the rectangular spaces, as long as the hall was wide and as broad as the rows of pillars were apart, were covered with painting. The painters would have stretched themselves supine on high moveable platforms and painted with spectacles on. The riches of the decorative aspect of Lepakshi is not so simple as to have been possible to be done with the use of stray ladders.

#### *Variety in Lepakshi Painting*

I mentioned that the Vijayanagar painting was based on Jain painting traditions. This later was miniature painting on palm-leaves. The areas available at Lepakshi were very large and broad ones. Even with long decorative strips at the top and bottom, a large area remained available for painting. We are lucky that the Jain painters did not choose to do miniature painting on these roofs even as latter painters did at Hampi and Macherla. Maybe the megasculpture which came earlier influenced them to do mega painting. (We have yet to see a painting of the size of Veerabhadra of Lepakshi even at Tanjore, where the Mahirastri rulers caused very large portrait to be painted in the eighteenth century). The Ajanta traditions could not have persisted through nine centuries. Broadly speaking, these paintings appear to be of three divisions. The first division constitutes celestial beings. Two centuries of Saiva and Vaishnava clashes and the north Indian gales of Muslim invasions had abated and south India had a respite. Internal religious feuds gave place to Hot Hot Advaita. Saiva and Vaishnava legends which were either forgotten or were shoven into garrets came back to the memories of people. Avatars of Shiva and Vishnu got installed in temple sanctum. Sculptors carved varieties of celestial beings. Bhikshaatana Shiva, Bhairava, Nataraj, Andhika samhaara were portrayed on Lepakshi pillars. Along the same lines did the paintings of Bhairava, Mahadeva (Lingodbhava), Andhika samhaara, Dakshinamurti, Chandisaanugraha, Bhikshaatana, Harihara, Kalyanasundara, Adhiraaravasyara, Tripura simhaara, Gouriprasaada, Ananditandava, Virshabharudhra (forms of) Avatars of Shiva, the ten incarnations of Vishnu, Pattaabhiramaswami and Vatapatrasayee appear. The second division is that of devotee groups. It was usual in those days for governors, feudatories and king to visit temples and line up along the paths of processions. The porticos and Verandas of palaces and harem were full of gentlemen and ladies lining up for audience. The painters of Lepakshi presented those rows here in line and colour. The third division of Lepakshi painting is puranic legends, like the marriage of Draupadi, story of Madhava Varma and Kiraataarjuneeya. The paintings on the roofs of the mukhamandapa, the perambulatory path of the closed hall, the closed hall and the temple of Raghunatha get covered by these divisions.

*Celestials*

In painting the celestials the painters had not portrayed the characteristics of those personalities mechanically in the way described in the *agamas*. They meditated on the fulsomeness of those beings and beautified them with living lines and color. We do not find in Jain miniature painting any attempt at beautifying the figures. Indra, the Vidya devis and even Mahavira appear to have enclosed themselves in the steel spring of an outline. (Even the ends of their aprons project upwards and stay in that position!) Most of the celestials (in Lepakshi) are seen in the northern Veranda and the front hall of the Raghunatha temple. The paintings in this hall and the Bhairava at the south-east corner are beautiful and noteworthy. They face us but do not present their profile. The eyes of Bhairava are alive and sparkling. The tribhanga posture shows delicacy. The outline is straight but is suggestive of life and rotundity. His height endows him with sublimity. Simple though it is, the arch (of makara torana) above his head suggests divinity. The delicacy of the fingers and their soft grasp of the weapons becomes the lord of the celestials. The dog by his side looks too symbolic with its crocodile snout and iron tail but he shows life in his eyes and curved back. The painter himself, who stands in supplication with folded hands creates a divine atmosphere. I feel that this is one of the very good paintings in Lepakshi. An indifferent undevoted painter could not do such a painting. It had been the Indian tradition for a painter, to visualise a celestial by meditation and then portray that appearance. The Jains were religious reformers. Their paintings were cent per cent symbolic. Realism gets crushed in their paintings and idealism does not peep in. The variety and power of color, combined with the symbolism of the poses endows them with the little artistic appeal they have. Blind following of this tradition could not have produced this painting of Bhairava. Though the *pralamba paada* Siva of the paintings of the *prambulatory* path round the Veerabhadra temple and the 'sleeping chamber' faces us just like the Mahavira of Jain paintings, the life in the eyes and suppleness of body-line excel the Jain achievement. This is observed also in the bull carrying Siva, seen in the Veranda paintings of the ardhmandapa or closed hall. The Matsya and Koorma avatars in the Raghunatha temple are beautiful figures. They not only surprise the visitor but inspire too. The Matsya and Koorma forms of the avatars of Vishnu in the Western Chalukyan sculptures on the basements of temples are only of the animal form. With the growth of Vaishnavite devotion and traditions, upper human form got attached to the lower animal form and beautiful compound forms were evolved. The eyes of the two figures here are attractive and we don't see another koorma with such lovely legs. The Jains never showed a fraction of this care in delineating legs. The run of the line in Lepakshi paintings is generally alive, while it is only with the dancer that the Jain painters achieved some effect with the line. The political upheaval of the Vijayanagar period is obviously at the back of this welcome change.

*Rows of persons*

When the deity worshipped is painted in the centre and devotees are lined up on either side, the composition would be complete and symmetry achieved. This symmetry is not patent in relief illustrations in sculpture. This method is highly suitable to portray the different forms of divine manifestation. Even in the palm-leaf miniature painting of the Jains, we see Chowrie-bearers on either side of a theerthankara and palanquin bearers in addition to the former, with Mahavira. These additional figures are undoubtedly intended for achieving symmetry and the beauty it can add. While we see only two or three additional figures with the theerthankaras, we see ten and six lining up, while Devasoori and Kumudachandra argue and while Bharata and Bahubali meet for the duel. The palm-leaf being too long and of limited breadth, the

only way to add to the crowd is to line up men. The painted areas in Lepakshi are also narrow and long and the Jain habit worked here too. Lepakshi figures stand in profile as they did in Jain miniatures. Their remote eyes protrude out of their sockets, their noses are sharp and the lower lines of their jaw-bones extend from the tips of their lips right upto their ears! Their throats are marked by three (horizontal) curves and the ends of their aprons are pointed. Garlands of flowers curve up and down at the top, the color print of their garments vary with vengeance persons whose feet are together bend backward like bows with the outlines of their calf muscles and buttocks stiff like springs. But all the rows of Lepakshi consist of standing devotees we don't see seated persons. Rarely do we find a dancer except it be a Bhringi walking with his raised third leg. The remote eyes of the devotees, the parallel lines of vibhooti on their foreheads and even the rows of pearls along the lines parting the hair of ladies being visible, we can guess that the painters wanted to show the persons not in profile but at about a 45° to us. But we see only two poses although this full profile and the frontal ones. The ancient poses described in Salivahana's Saptasati endured upto and beyond the Vijayanagar period!

### *Poses*

All situations in the paintings of Lepakshi have been answered by these two poses only. In the Knaata-Arjuna open air scene there was the necessity of putting in a man on that hill, a man behind this tree and so on, but there was no need of bringing in a dozen persons in any other picture. We can't therefore say that the Lepakshi painters attempted compositions. Even while painting individual figures, their attention was only on working at the outline. Rotundity could appear only by line, not through light and shade. Drapery was done without any trial to suggest the form beneath. Long over-all garments reach below the knees. The sashes round men's waists indicate dimensions to some extent. With celestials like Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna etc. the manner they wear their dhoties shows their legs separated. The sarees of ladies carry varieties of binds and spots on them but not any folds to indicate curvatures of their form. Any modelling was achieved only through the suggestion of the lines but not through colour and its shade. In the miniatures of Jain painting the outline is found to be done in a narrow colored band which sometimes indicates small heights and depths by differences in its shades. We do not see that in Lepakshi. All persons stand along lines, they are not distributed over areas. Rarely, as we see in the story of Madhavavarni, a lone man is seen on the other side of the chariot. The poses of persons in the crowds are generally all alike, they do not alter in Lepakshi. All feet are turned completely that side or this. We can't make out if the three headed god behind Thumbara is going to the right or left if it is not by the indication of his feet.

### *Kaivaara*

But these rows of persons show us the rows of devotees of that period. Rivalries of Shaiva and Vaishnava groups were getting buried, pure faith was bathed in ideology and the Mailaru Veeras and Veera Vushnavas approached the beautiful forms of benevolent incarnations with enlightened devotion and did obeisance with kaivaara hands. We see this kaivaara all over in Lepakshi. Kaivaara as a mode of expressing devotion is not seen in Jain painting, we find chowrie whisks and Namaskaars any where. We see the Kaivaara form of worship in the sculptures as well as the paintings of Lepakshi, (it is incorrect to name them 'upadesa mudras'). All these hands are the hands of the devotees of the Vijayanagara period. After the Ganga Avatarana mega relief of Mahabalipuram we see so many Kaivaara hands only in the paintings of Lepakshi.

*Shadungas*

Of the six limbs of painting, 'Roopabheda pramaana, Bhaava, Laavanya, Saadrisyam and Varnikaabhanga' mentioned by Yashodhara in his commentary to Vatsaayanana's sootras, none except saadrisya is manifest in the Lepakshi painting. Roopabheda (difference of personal look) is next to nothing. The basic outline for all persons is almost the same. To obtain the form through Yogic imagination, but not by observation of worldly forms is traditional in Indian art or sculpture. So, there is more play for imagination than for observation. (The sculptured portraits of the Vijayanagar personalities, Krishnadevaraya at Chidambaram or Tirupati, Tirumala and Venkata at Tirupati, Timmarusu at Tadparti, and the many chieftains at Somapalem or Ahobilam are only effigies, NOT portraits!) So the painter forms a picture of the contemporary personality and spins out other personal forms out of that ONE form. The generally observed close resemblance of figures (whether sculptured or painted) is due to this habit. We see that in Nagarjunakonda Goli and Mahabalipuram. Another reason for the close resemblance of painted pictures is the way a student learns how to draw, i.e. by practising to draw on the sketches provided for the purpose by the teacher as is done by children learning writing of letters. Naturally do sketches done by the student appear similar. It is only the colour of the outline, borders and stripes and printing of the garments and the insignia, weapons and the like which help us to distinguish the different persons. In ladies such differences appear universal at Lepakshi. The bustle and confusion of colour printing is always rampant in Jain painting. However small the painting, this feature is patent in it. It is not enough truth to say that there is a large variety in the draperies of ladies at Lepakshi. The full truth appears to be that no lady of that period put on a saree like the one which any other one did!.. Centrality and completeness were achieved in these paintings by putting in the prominent figure in the centre of the linear scheme. It was not necessary to use big size (pramaana) either to indicate the importance of personalities as in Ajanta or to achieve centrality as at Amaravati. We do not see therefore, pramaana turned into use at Lepakshi. What is more, realism appears to have been mocked at by these painters by making the boar comparable in size to a bison and parrots comparable to rabbits! Relativity of sizes is not a current coin at Lepakshi, as it is not in Jain painting in general. Bhava or (facial) expression is seen in some hunters of the Kiraata-Arjun painting and some worshipped deities but as in Jain painting, we do not see here either, any general attempt to show bhaava. The fingers of the hands are delicate no doubt, but do not show feelings as they do in Ajanta. The contemporary show of humility in temples, is seen all over in Lepakshi in the form of Kaivara. Colour scheme at Lepakshi is not accidental. It is clearly intended. Siva is fair in all the paintings. Matsya, Koorma and Vatapatra shayi are blue. Tigerskin, is tigerskin not a leopard's. The 'diamond' weapons of Indra are dark. Neighbouring figures in crowds necessarily differ in colour as do couples in Ajanta. This is generally patent in Jain painting but the indication of characterisation, which critics attribute to color difference in Jain painting is not present here. Painting the theerthankaras in mellow yellows, and making their garments white and spotless as their character, and indicating the raajasa (motiveful) atmosphere prevailing around those saints by the red back-ground, the Jain (miniature) painters showed those sacred personalities in prominent relief. Indra and other devotees were made in light red or brown. The Lepakshi painters distinguished all persons by a change in the shade of colour. But the colour change was used only to show the different persons clearly. Ochre mixed with lamp black in several proportions was used as body colour. We see also chalk colour mixed with black in different proportions. We can't say that these varieties are absent in Jain painting, we see these used for Saraswati and Moon in the Kalpasootra book of Patan library, but we have to say that these shades are particularly developed by Lepakshi painters. Jains used yellows particularly



for body colour. Their figures show clearly over the contrasty red background. Though employing a red background, the Lepakshi painters did not make their figures yellow, they made them brown. These browns could not be the result of their ignorance of a possible chemical combination of chalk and saffron used for white and yellow shades. We do not see yellows exclusively used. So it is clear that they chose red ochre, black and white colors in varying proportions to paint the bodies of the figures. Matsya, Koorma and Vitapatrasaayi are in thick green or blue, others are in various shades of red, black and white combination. The nascent enthusiasm following political freedom and fearlessness disregards tradition in introducing contemporary realism and that is what happened at Lepakshi.

### *Modelling :*

It is amusing to mark that the Jain painters, who 'printed' so many designs on the sarrees of ladies, took no notice at all of the folds or curves of those garments covering the form beneath. Even the jewels worn by the ladies do not get curved or folded. If at all, the curved lines of the edges alone indicate the turn of the dress. The dresses of even squatting ladies are 'printed' with designs taking account of the area available but not the folding even of their knees, much less the existence of calves separate from the upper halves of the legs. The painters drew the outlines of the dress and thereafter proceeded to provide the stripes, squares and spots. The squares appear as drawn with the help of a flat frame, spots and embroidery of birds being no exception. There are cases of curved lines indicating the forms covered. These, I feel are cases, coming in not as mechanical contrasts to straight lines but only in part conformity to what the painters saw on every festive occasion. Vertical curves to indicate the folds of sarrees, and slant lines indicating aprons, curves and folds of men's dhoties and horizontal curves indicating the thighs are examples to show the jumps of realism over hurdles of tradition. These stripes or lines were drawn straight away with brushes but not sketches made previously. We cannot name these cases as any modelling. We do not see in Lepakshi paintings any attempt to indicate rotundity by light and shade or curved lines. Figures are painted all over in the same shade. Care was bestowed to confine the colour to within the outline, not to show heights and depths by alteration of the shade. In showing the body colour however these painters approached the realistic by using a variety of white and black shades. These shades speak of their originality too, which shows in good relief over the hackneyed red traditional background.

### *Illustration :*

These paintings illustrate puranas and history. The forms of Siva shown on the roof of the northern veranda of the ardhamandapa from the east to the western edge, Lingodbhava -, Andhakasamhaara Dakshina -, Chandishaanugraha -, Bhikshatana -, Harihara -, Ardhanarisvara -, Kalyanasundara -, Tripurabhanjana -, Gouriprasadaka -, Anandataandava -, Vrishabhaaroodha - were described by the late Dr. P. Srinivasaachari. He described Parvati alone near the western edge but we see Chandrashekhara too by her side. All these are forms of Siva. It is surprising that the linga at the eastern end carries decorative lines instead of the traditional contour ones. (Inside the ardhamandapa, on the roof before the temple of Parvati, towards the south, we see on a linga a full face with Vibhoon bands, eyes and mouth painted.) The Bhikshatana murti does not wear a garland of skulls as the sculptured form does. The Chandrashekhara at the other end clearly shows the limit of the skill of his painter, with his feet turned in opposite directions. The only Gangadhara of Lepakshi is seen in this veranda. We see fish also in the Ganga.

*Paintings in the closed hall :*

The roof of the hall before Raghunathaswamy is divided into three into three-nine 'squares' showing Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha and Parasurama avataars with and Lakshminarayana in the centre. Vamana is not coloured fair. The central figure holds the conch and discus and not a bow, he is Lakshminarayana, not Raghunatha. As we enter the big closed hall (ardhamandapa) from the north, we see on its roof, Umasahitamurti and celestials showering flowers on him from the clouds. To his south is the giant Veerabhadra turned towards our right. To his west is Virupanna rising upto his knees. This figure is like the one on the second panel in the east of the open hall (mukhamandapa). Virupanna's wife is seen on the other side. Looking up, while going round the Veerabhadra temple from the Parvati temple, we see Siva in white colour, and Lingodbhavamurti to his south. Veerabhadra facing our right, Vishnu and Veerabhadra again follow. The present day 'lumber room' containing a stone pedestal with linga in it has Veerabhadra painted before it on the roof. On the roof of the lane to the north of Parvati temple we see Arthanarisvara, and Isvara towards the east. The three panels on the 'bed-room' depict the forms of Siva again. The central panel has a peculiar makara torana over Isvara.

*Cheetah hunt :*

The hunting scene above Durga of the closed hall is very imposing. These hunters wear shoes made of rope but they are different from those in the Kiraataarjuniya. The cheetah is bold with a clear outline alive and flexible. The change from gloomy red to the white of this background throws a flood of light on to this picture. These hunters are not wooden like the kiraatas, they are lively. The blood gushing out of the wound made by the dagger, and the cheetah biting the hunter's head make the scene very realistic. Line, colour and illustration are powerful in this painting. May be this one is a more recent painting done in the heydays of Lepakshi festivities.

*Stories :*

There is a large number of paintings in the mukhamandapa. As we go from the east to west, we see eight panels each extending from north to south. On the panels are painted, Draupadi Kalyana, Veerabhadra anugraha, Gouri Kalyana, appearance of Isvara, Bhookailas, Dakshinamurty, Ananda-taandava and coronation of Sri Rama. We see three large panels spreading from west to east as we go from the north to the door of the ardhamandapa. The story of Madhavavarma, Indra's benevolence and Kiraataarjuneeya are painted on these respectively. The next painted area is the roof of the ardhamandapa. The Madhavavarma story and Kiraataarjuneeya present very happy contrast to the panels, on which we see persons standing bow-like, curved in their postures. In the first one, except for the cow, the chariot and the divine (Parvati and Paramesvara) couple, all are posed alike. The painter hits at our hearts, making the cow lick the crushed calf. Kiraataarjuneeya gave him a veritable holiday, releasing him from the bonds of purana. The fugitive deer, rabbits, dogs and parrots, the bucks hiding in corners as the boar runs past, the hunters trying to spot the boar looking around from the branches of trees, the laughing youth running over the hills, the confusion of the mendicants at the sight of the wild boar, gave enough freedom to the painter's brush and he did his best in this open air scene. Confusion and consternation are clearly seen in the limbs of persons in this painting. The hands of the figures in other paintings are delicate as in Ajanta, but they are not expressive. The left hands of all the men in the rows droop

vertically. Their postures again are bow-like. It is only Narada standing behind the bachelor youth, waiting for Isvara's darshan, who is a bit natural in his humility. In the sculptural representation, Bhringi has three legs and he bends slightly to provide contrasty space to the odd lower extremity. The painter just imitated him, omitting the odd limb.

#### *Small figures :*

Small sized figures are somewhat better in comparison with large ones. The boar is outsized compared to the hunters. The fore legs of the cow in the Madhavavarma anecdote look like wooden supports, not like legs. This kind of heightening the front of animals is patent in the stone elephants on either side of the temple entrances in Kakatiya sculpture (Those sculptures appear to be due to the Jains). The snout of Bhairava's dog resembles one of a crocodile. Isvara's bull, with its short horns belongs to the breed of the mountain basava. The heads of parrots (in the Kiraatarjuneeya panel) are just as big as the heads of the rabbits. The deer running at the far end of the panel are more natural. The bull rising before Isvara, on its hind legs, is not bad. The boy brahmachari, the pramatha massaging Isvara's feet, the king's official with a tall Vijayanagar cap proceeding at a good distance to the cow in its front, the younger members of the harem, the painter himself bowing in reverence to Bhairava, Draupadi sitting on Drupada's thigh, and the young hunter aiming an arrow at the boar are quite good. Deformities set in only when large figures are drawn.

#### *Clouds:*

Trees and temples are too bad. Stones and hills are indicated by curved lines, not by straight blocks as in Ajanta. Clouds are delineated as long boats with one difference that their bottom lines are formed by a series of connected lines curving upwards. Local friends named them Vimanas. But, remembering the forms of the clouds sculptured at Aihole and Deogarh and the mendicants offering worship from over those, one feels that it is those clouds only that drifted through time to the Vijayanagar period. The hermit doing namaskar to Bhikshatana Siva on the pillar to the right of the staircase to the open hall, the celestial high above the bull in the south-east corner of the Kalyanamandapa, and the worshipper of Vighnesvara are on the clouds, their knees and ankles are clearly visible, they are not on Vimanas! The celestials in the Madhavavarma story are visible from their knees upwards, as if they are in Vimanas. Vimanas could not be so bald, could they? And that too with box type ones sculptured on every hero stone only a century or two before?

#### *Painting versus Sculpture :*

The trees, which are being pulled out by elephants, shown in relief on the outer wall of the ardhamandapa appear in the paintings too. Such imitation is inevitable, when sculpture is done earlier and painting a little later. What is more, painting had no traditions just preceding the Vijayanagar period and it had to draw inspiration from the Sri Sailam sculpture imported to Lepakshi. Imitation naturally followed. That is why we find Kiraatarjuneeya, Lords of the eight corners, the five headed Visva Brahma, mendicants, Bhikshatana Siva, Bhringi Tumbura and Narada appear in sculpture and painting alike. Andhakasamhaara, Raghumathesvara and Veerabhadra are seen in painting as well as sculpture. The six handed crowned deity seen sculptured at the centre of the upper door jamb of the front cellar of Papanaashesvara is seen painted on the roof of the southern Verandah of the ardhamandapa. The dikpaalakas have four hands in sculpture but two only in painting. Thumbura is same in both but

Bhringi is without his third leg ! Narada is same but he lost his Veena in the painting. Indra holds the Vajra alone in both his hands but the painted Vajra is (or had perhaps turned) black. The story of Siritayala seen sculptured on the outer walls of the ardhmandapa would have also been painted but now lost. As with sculpture, so with paintings. We see the stories like Draupadi Kalyana, Madhavavarma's tragic end, Kiraataanjuneeya narrating puranic anecdotes while the avataars in Raghunatha temple and of Siva induce Yoga or devotion, thus completing their appeal to the devotee. The several legacies of Ajanta art like the tender fingers, vertically descending moustaches, deliberate alteration of the colour of neighbouring figures, moving aprons, decorative garlands and the profuse use of red ochre together with the mega size of the figures, gather together to declare this ill-fated art as 'out and out Indian'. If it had not that life as its inspiration, the triangular beards of the hunters, the sharp pointed noses protruding eyes and unstable postures would have converted it to the maimed figure decoration seen on village temple walls of the British period. After Lepakshi, perhaps it was this painter, who painted the roofs of the Chippagiri temple. The paintings of Somapalem, Hampi (Viroopaksha) and Kanchipuram were later ones in succession, judging from excellence. They do not hold together as Lepakshi art does. We see their fragments collected at Sramana Belagola.

#### *Contemporary habits :*

The contemporary social habits are seen in Lepakshi painting too as in sculpture. The upper half of the sarees of ladies goes round the body twice for good covering. May be the habit of wearing petticoats was not widely adopted. If it had been, variety of printing designs would have shown very richly. Plaiting the hair is seen here and there but gathering the hair into a big knot was the habit of the respected. Loose flowers were stuck into those knots but not short garlands. The noses of ladies do not show nose screws, nor were they pierced into fine holes to carry ornaments even as in Ajanta times. Poet Allasani Peddana made even unmarried Manorama wear (sounding) rings round her toes ! These ladies of later times do not have them. Men wear flexible sherwanis reaching down to their knees and tied up their loins with an upper cloth, when going to a temple for prayers. Garlands of pearls were worn round their necks and wrists. All visitors to temples wore head gears, in the shape of turbans or caps. These caps were all long as is the diadem of Krishnadevaraya. They were made of thick cloth, and carried embroidery and printed designs. At one end of the first tiara of the gopura of Tadiparti Ramalingesvara we see chief minister Timmarusu sculptured in stone. At the diametrically opposite end, stands the sculptor of that gopura with a characteristic cap, the upper part of which curves like a fold, to the front. Timmarusu's cap is taller, which shows a vertical edge to the front at its top; and this edge slightly curves forward as the edge of a curved sword. This cap, which is the insignia of the chief minister is not seen elsewhere. A sculptor-master wore the flexible short cap sharply curving forwards. In Lepakshi we see Virupanna, and Veeranna, Governors of provinces and their sons wearing long and gently tapering caps rounded off at their tops. The nayakas or commanders sculptured in the audience mandapa at the Somapalem temple, and also the Chukkalur temple wear similar caps. We see the sculptor with his characteristic cap, painted in profile at Lepakshi. By his side is the painter-master with his low hemispherical turban, with a small round prominence at its centre. The painter with this kind of turban is seen also in the paintings on the roof of the Chippagiri temple where we don't see a sculptor. This interesting series of professional and positional headgears of painter, sculptor, general, and chief minister gets added to by the musician's head-dress put on by Annamaacharya and his son at Tirumala, in the sculptures on the sankeertana bhaandaara and culminates in the royal double stranded diadem of Sri Krishnadevaraya at Tirumala

and Chidambaram. Lepakshi paintings show three of these six varieties. The painter of the Bhairava picture stands by his side with folded hands, wearing the painter's turban. We have at Lepakshi two different figures of the painter. All the painting was not done by one painter as can be seen from the types of lady profiles or even the bovine creatures, cow and bull.

*Buildings of those days :*

Temples, chariot, fortwalls and decorative paper baskets are amusing. Temples are not like the contemporary Vijayanagara ones but are like the four-pillared mandapas, surmounted by high stepped pyramids somewhat like the ones we see on the palaces at Chandragiri. The chariot is not like the Vitthala temple chariot but is like the western Chalukyan ones of Alampur reliefs. They have, like the chariot on the Sri Sailam walls, three wheels on either side. Temples inside forts probably had the abutment of the fortwalls in those times. We see the small painted temple of Siva against the fortwall with battlements. We do not see such walls in Vijayanagar. But the boundary wall of the temple at Sri Sailam is like this.

The traditions on hand, when painting was revived at Lepakshi, were all Jain. So the painters adopted the profile postures, the traditional way of painting the eyes and faces, decoration of the draperies and the curved floral garlands and started painting. With the entry of contemporary men and women into the paintings, round bunching of hair, pearl strings along the line of parting of hair, vertical folds of sarees, sherwanis and dhoties, contemporary political insignia came in and made way to realism. The miniature ladies with disappearing waists got replaced by Telugu women. Palm-leaf books, chariots and hills entered to bring the former supernatural to the natural atmosphere. Roundness descended on bodies, flexibility into poses, life to body lines and realism into the colour scheme as the painting, which formerly specialised in doing theerthankaras painted contemporary assemblages. It is unfortunate that this mega painting did not spread farther than chippagiri near Guntakal.

## V. LEPAKSHI LITERATURE

### *Yakshaganas :*

By 1537 A.D., or by the times of Atchutadevaraya, Lepakshi was only a village in the Roddam district, and that too, a small one. The village itself was far from the Koormasaila, on the site of 'old Lepakshi'. With the rise of the temple of Veerabhadra, there arose in the vicinity of the hill, a small township under the name Veeresvarapura. With the visits of kings, generals and governors, the properties of the temple grew, daily festivities mounted and the town spread over a large area. All the records on the stones of Lepakshi are in the Kannada language. This means that Lepakshi was in the Kannada region then. Even at Goravanahalli the same language obtained. However, as the town spread, more and more Telugus came in, with the increase of festivities to deities in the temple, visitors swelled periodically into crowds and discourses, dances and open theatrical plays came in. I do not know which plays sprung up in dedication to the Hari and Hara of Lepakshi in Kannada but read through five Telugu ones. Krishnaleela, Sivaleela and Ramanataka were composed by Jodi Venkataraya. Ramachandra, the disciple of Gundaavadhani composed 'Damayanti Parinaya' a dramatised opera. Another poet dramatised Mahabharata from the first to the fifth cantoes suitable for a four nights play. Venkataraya kavi wrote a treatise on dance, 'Natyapradeepanam' ! We know of one 'Rukminiparinaya' opera in name only. In the south-western part of the closed hall of the Veerabhadra temple we see Mahishamardani, being worshipped today as Durga. About a century and half ago, a mendicant, devoted to Chandikeshva, stayed at Lepakshi in deference to a shepherd's prayer and did special worship to this Durga, 'who came out of a pillar'. That worship turned into an annual feature, and people started indicating the temple as 'Durgamma temple' ! A book of one hundred verses a sataka with 'Stambha avirbhava Durga, Bharga pramada, swarga apavarga prada' as the fourth line of every verse — was also composed. It is no mean feat to work up the verses rhyming in every second syllable of each of the four hundred lines with 'ambha'. All these books go together as so many garlands of flowers to endow Lepakshi with literary fragrance and make up its fulsomeness; a fulsomeness not seen with this riches in any of the shrines of Andhra. Of the plays, Krishnanataka, the earliest one and dedicated to Lepakshi Hari, was composed by Jodi Venkataraya. It was intended for an open air performance, it contains verses and songs in addition to speeches. Verse-song combinations suitable for repartee are also introduced. These are not found however in the plays of the times of the Naayaks of Tanjore, these are seen only in plays less than a couple of centuries old. The sound cadences of the songs became very popular in dance dramas and so no wonder they accompanied a verse at its last line or the later half of it. In the colophon at the end it is written that this play was completed on the Vijayadasami day of 1835 A.D. A manuscript of this play found its way to the oriental Manuscripts library of Madras and published by a press of its old Washermanpet, as a fragment.

'Siva Leela' was this author's next play, completed by November 1839. With his experience of having tried Krishnanataka, he introduced more dance element and expanded the story. At the end of the play, Siva appears sitting on his bull, as he is seen in the sculptures and paintings of Lepakshi.

The 'Santapradheepika' describes thirty-two katanas or important dance poses in six chapters, written in verse only. Books on Tandava or masculine dance are rare and this is the third good work of the same author which is very important.

Lepakshi Ramayana, an opera-drama intended for a performance on three consecutive nights, is this writer's fourth composition. This was completed by 1843 February. This drama in particular spread all through the country is a welcome popular entertainment on festive nights. The Lepakshi compositions were all of them done by Kannada writers. This bilingual proficiency and affection is characteristic of Kannada literators of Anantapur district to this day. "May their tribe increase"!

## VI. MUSIC IN LEPAKSHI

Even by the veena end of the third or the Tuluva dynasty of Vijayanagar music had not developed into first rate art. In the museum of the Tirupathi devasthanam, we see a stone inscription of a 'Geeta Prabandha' composition made out of melodic designs, and some polemics, with drumsounds and sound caparisoned letters. Even by the time of Venkata II, more progress was not made as can be seen from the Geetaprabandha dedicated to him, published in 'Sangeetha sarvaartha sara sangraha'. The Veena of Naarada, described earlier by Nandi Timmana and that of Varoodhini described by poet Peddana later (both belonging to the court of Krishnadevaraya), are of the type of moveable steps, not the fixed bridge type evolved after Atechutaraya. Varoodhini's Veena had two hollow resonators like the slender Rajasthani type. In Lepakshi, we see Naarada and Moon-god handling veenas with single resonators in the natyamandapa. In the paintings, the attendant girl behind the lady reading a palm-leaf manuscript is seen playing upon a similar veena. Songsters and kinnaras in the pillar reliefs play on similar veenas too. Even the Ajanta paintings (Cave 17) show this type of veena. It is an open question therefore, whether the veena seen at Lepakshi is the traditional one or the contemporary one.

### *Other instruments Shennoi :*

The play with the conch and flat drum mentioned even in Jataka stories is done at Lepakshi by mailaaru soldiers. The horn and the Sringanaada are also seen. The strong and the delicate drums beaten with sticks and palms respectively are here. And what is particularly seen at Lepakshi is the shennoi type of pipe, handled by the Sun-god in the natyamandapa. We see a pipe ending in a conch blown by monkeys which lead on an arrested elephant in Barhut. Long pipes are seen in Sanchi reliefs, not the shennoi pipe with holes for manipulating the musical notes. I do not remember to have seen the shennoi in Ajanta. The dance hall at Lepakshi shows the drum, the mridanga, shennoi, cymbals and veenas which are seen also in today's dance performances. We hear of a Koochipudi dance drama troupe producing an opera before Veeranasimharaya of Vijayanagar (Meckenji Records, Maachupalli Kaifiat) but we do not know which instruments were played. The dance hall of Lepakshi shows all the players of the contemporary dance halls of Vijayanagar, and the shennoi (the name 'naadaswara' patched up to give an indigenous name to the adaptation of the Persian instrument, is of quite a recent origin, belongs to this century only) is one of them. So, the shennoi (shah-noi) came in during the Vijayanagar period.

Having had to serve dance primarily, the songs in the dramas of Lepakshi cater mostly to rhythm and not so much to rhyme. They help us to piece together the wholesomeness of the art that was Lepakshi. Fulsome though unfinished, brilliant yet time worn, complete though disjointed at corners, that great small temple keeps calling since four centuries and more. Lepakshi calling - when shall it be answered?

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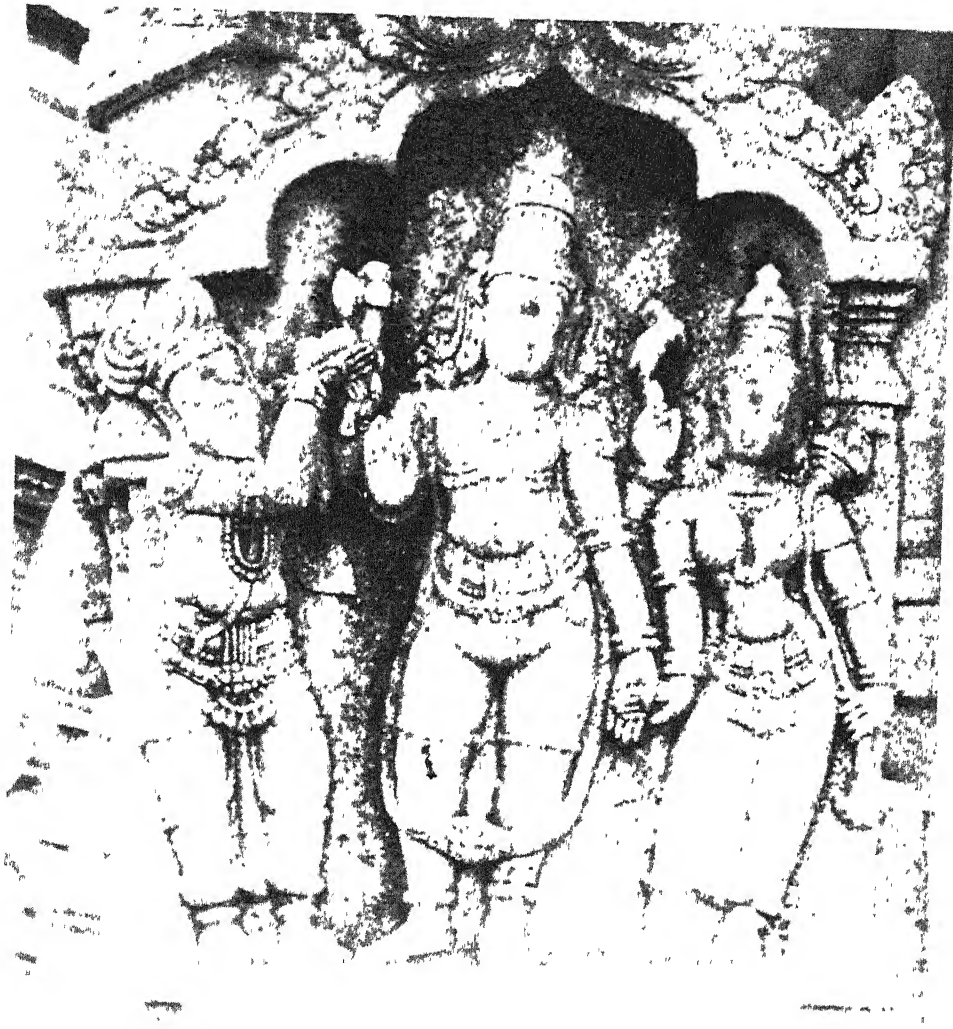




SHIVARA AND BRIDE



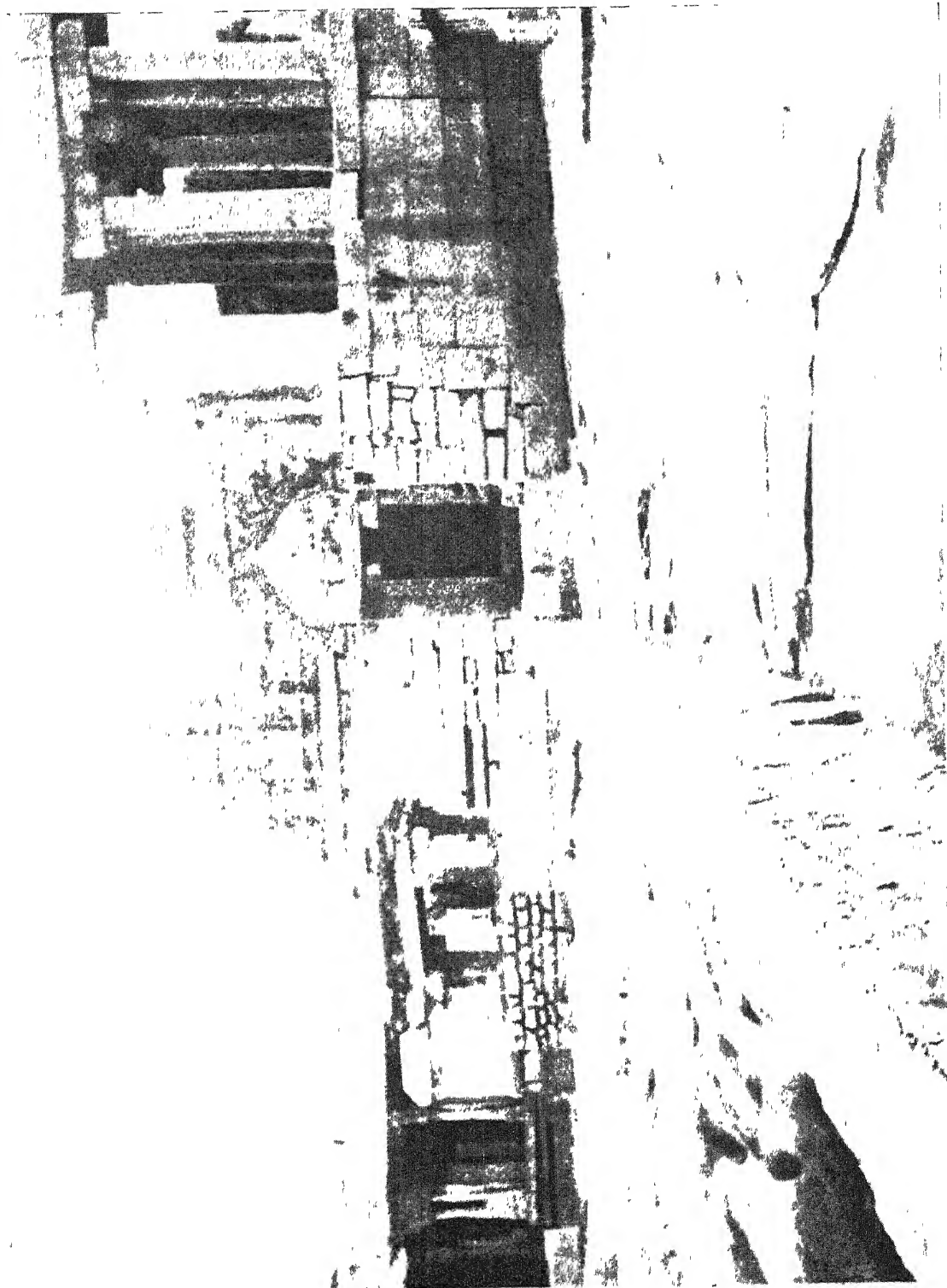
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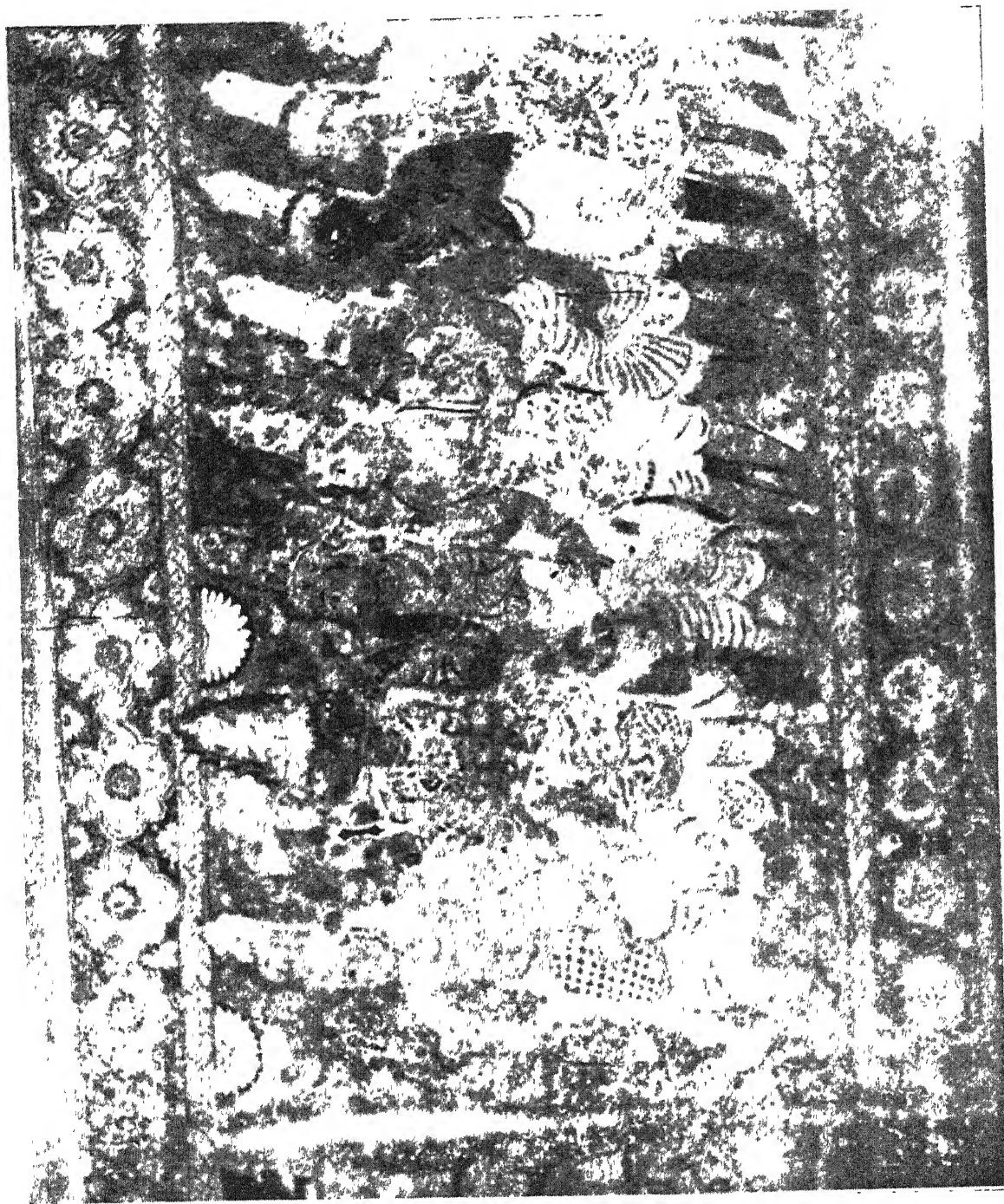
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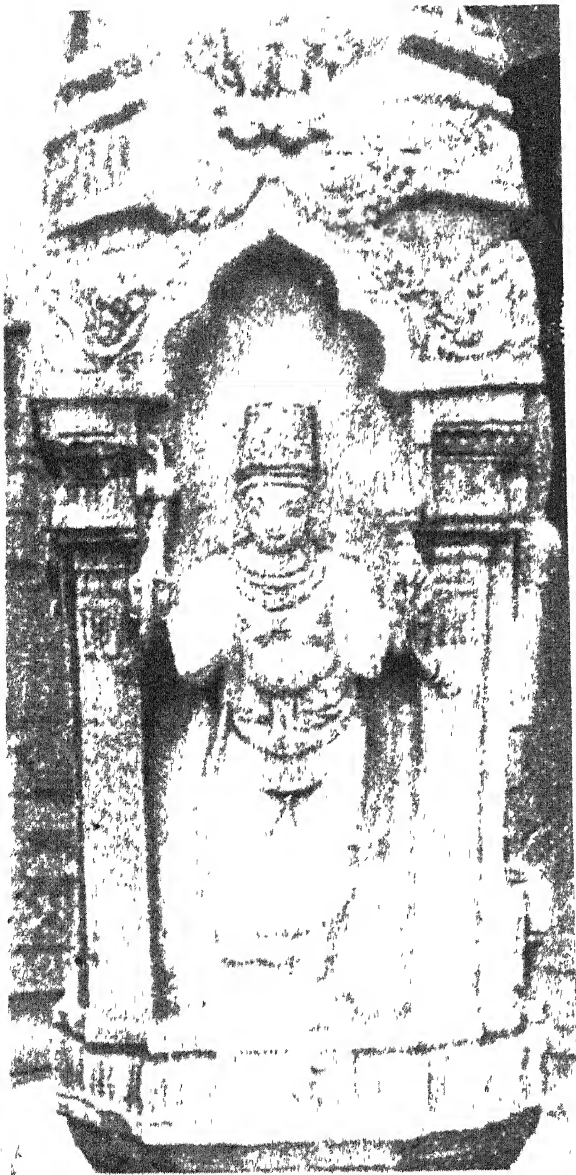
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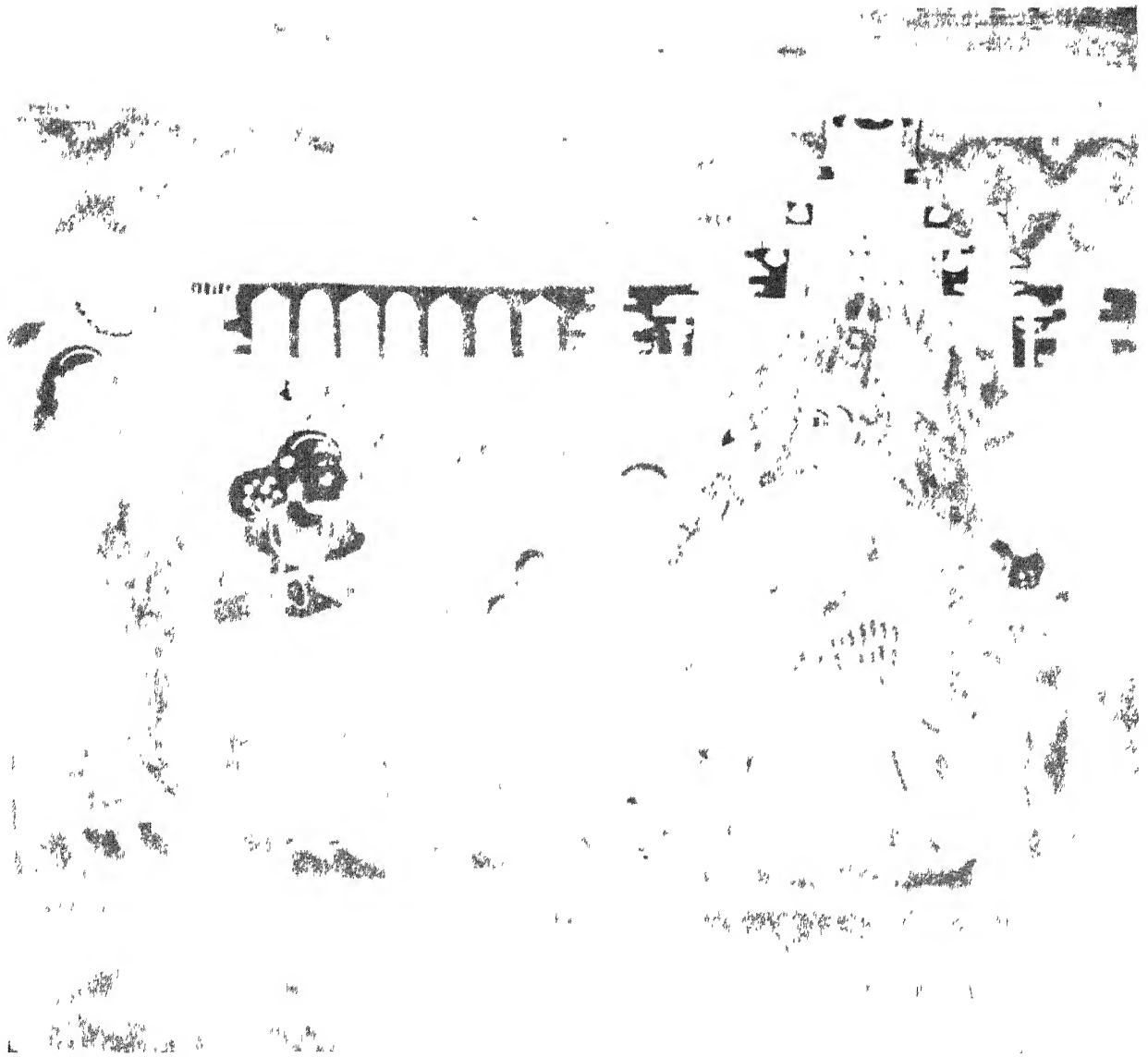


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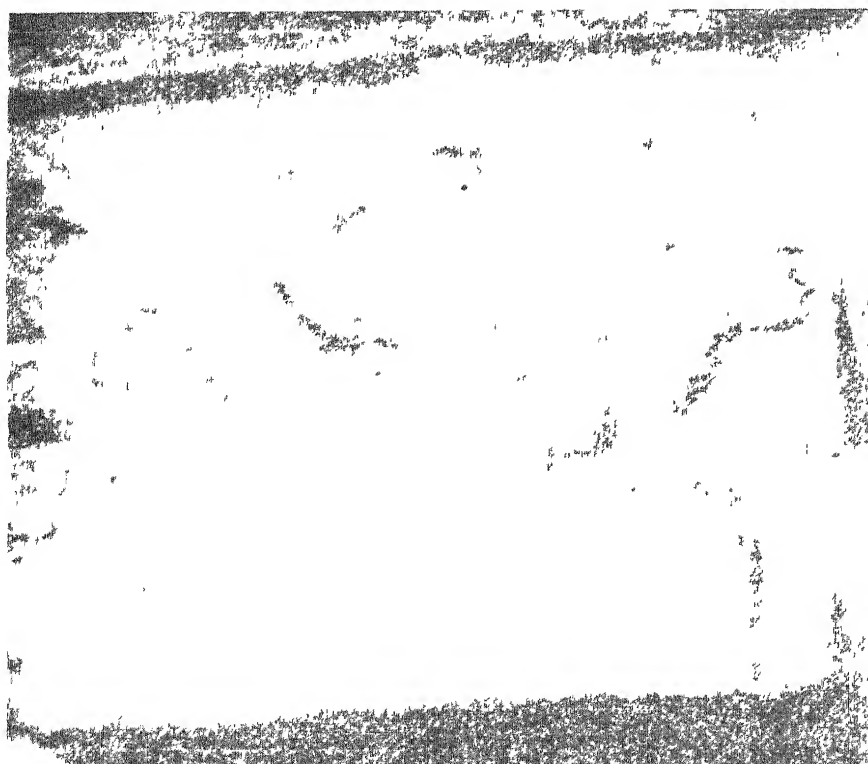




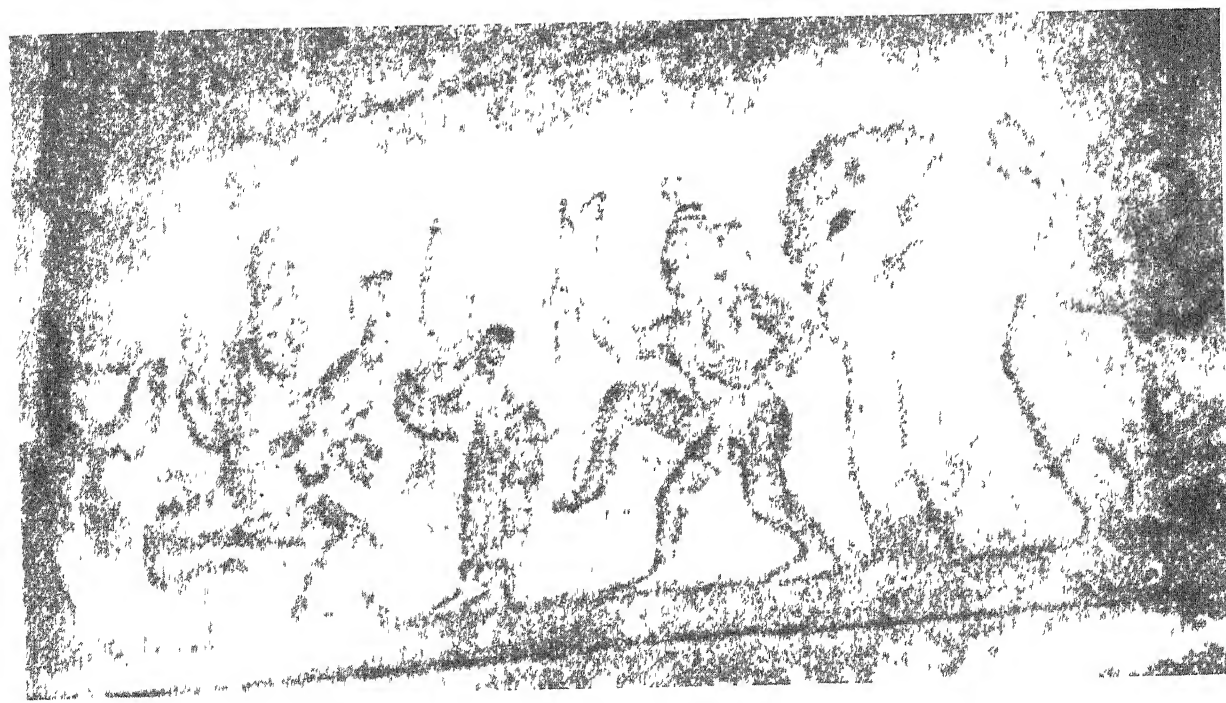
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